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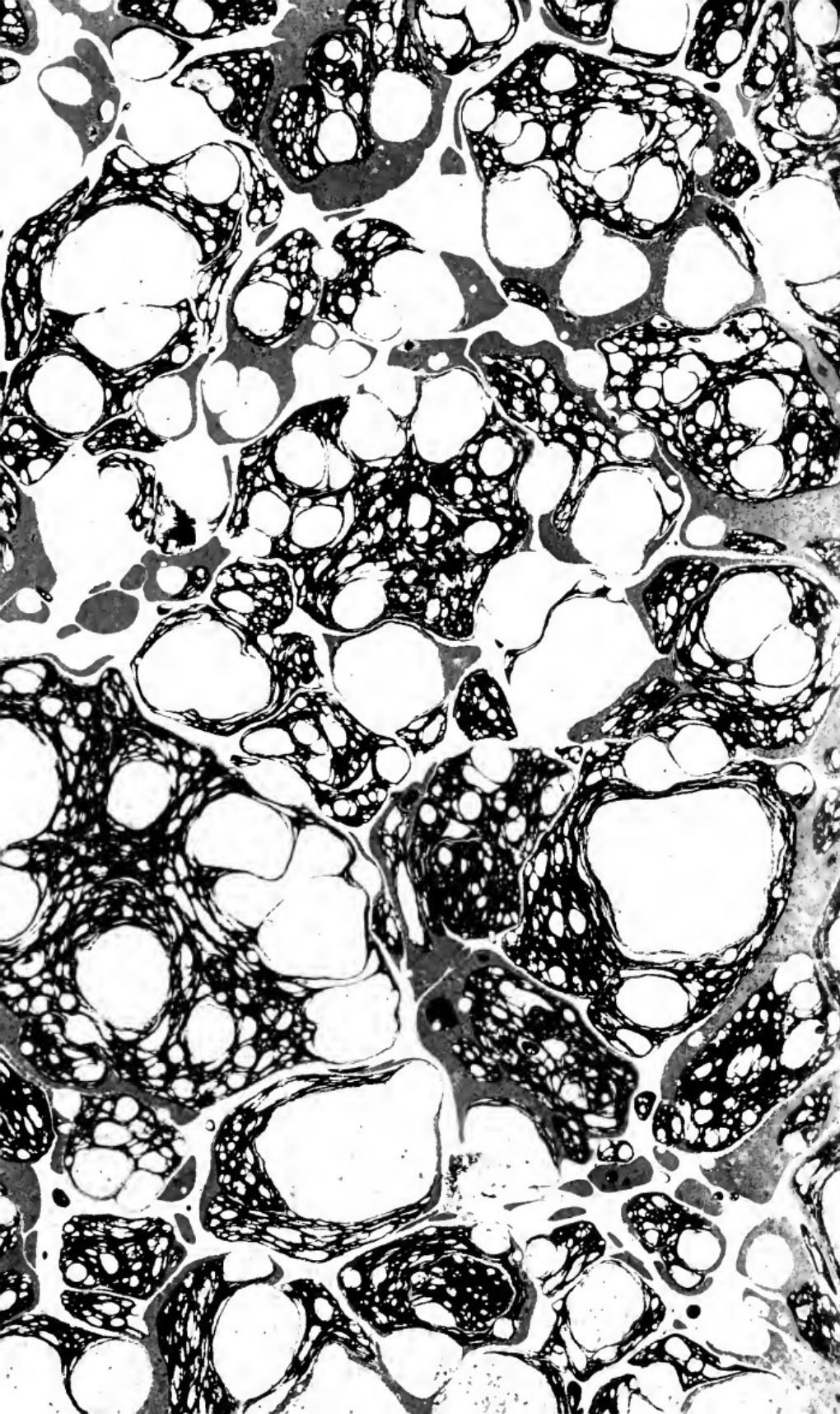
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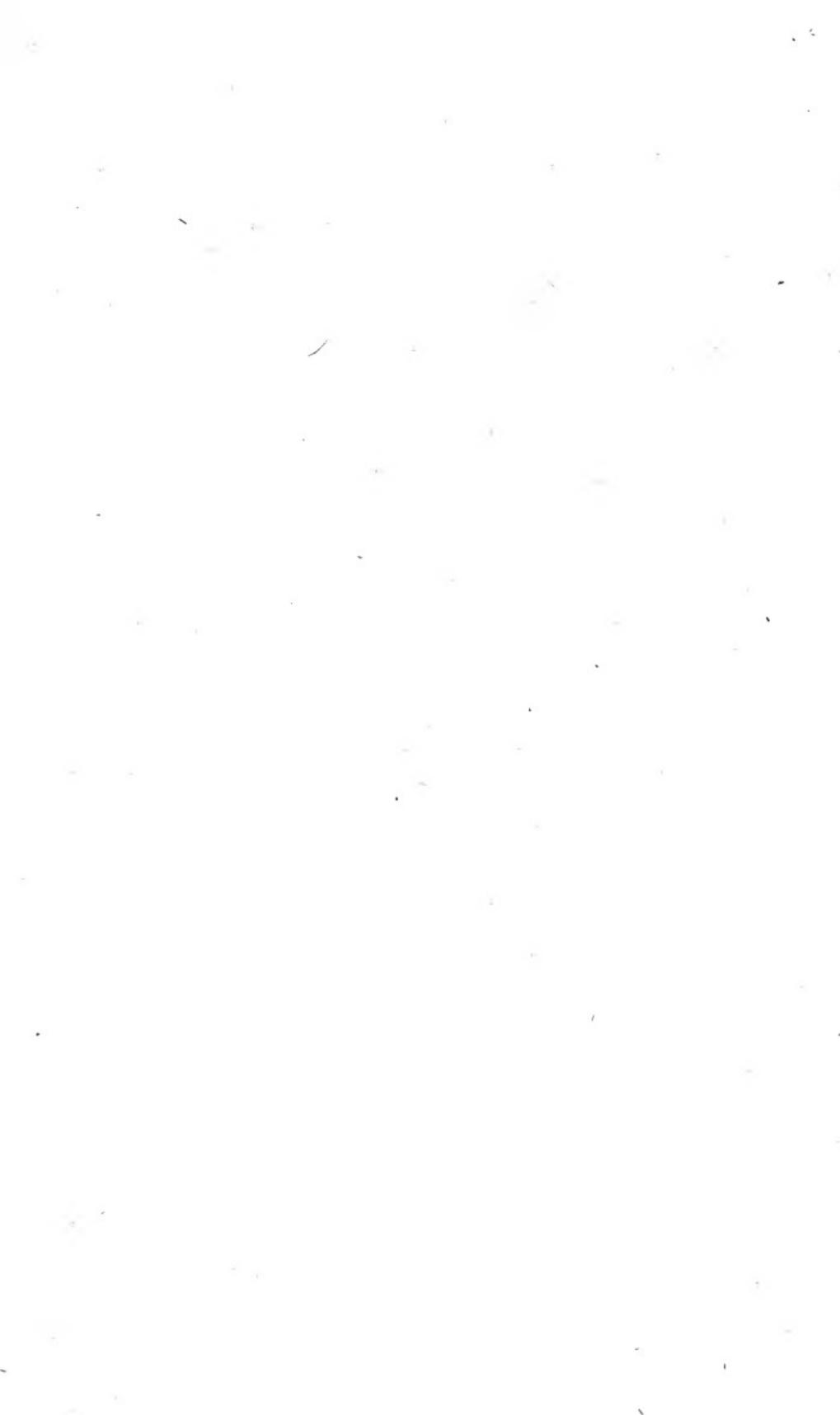
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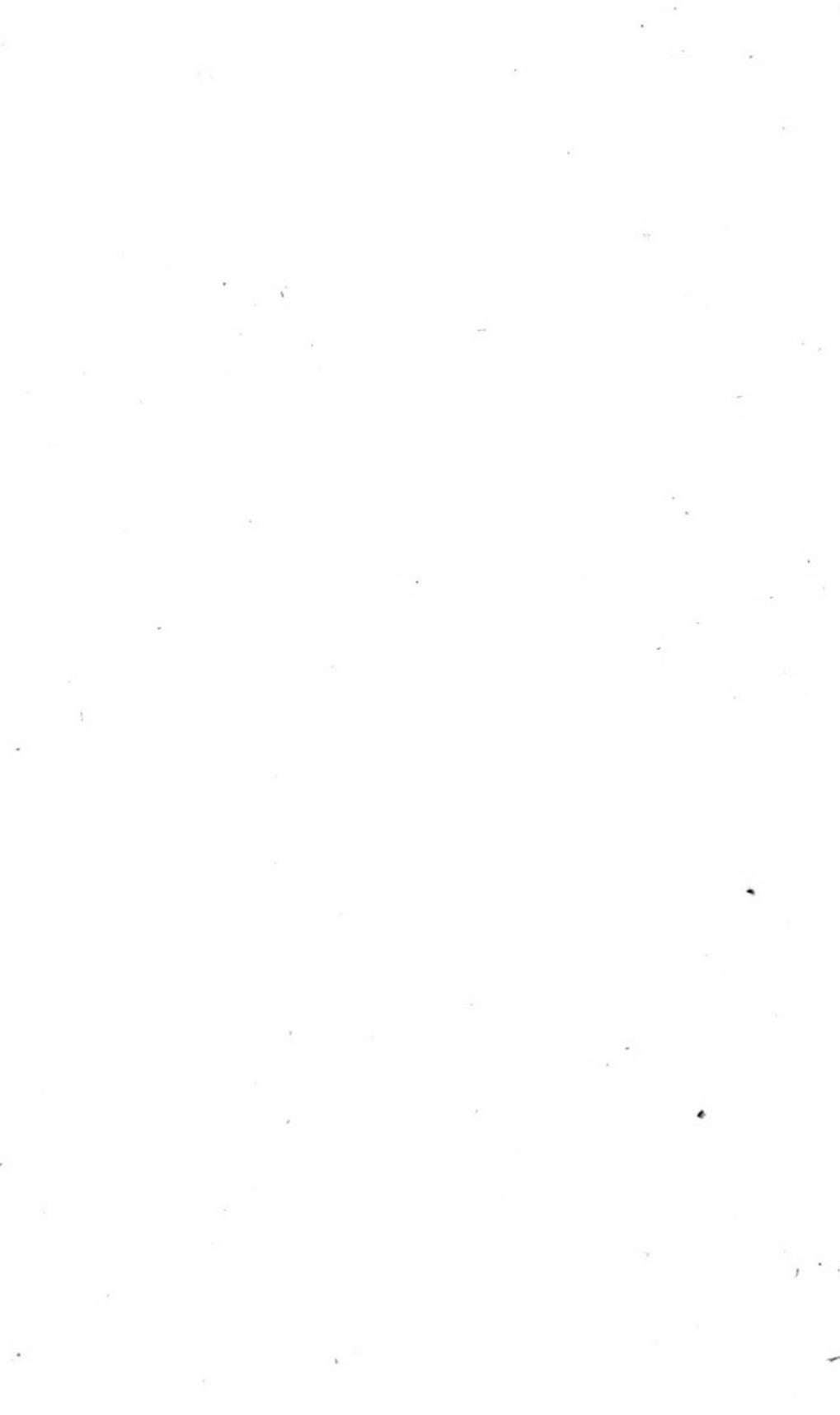












JULIA DE VIENNE.

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JULIA
DE
VIENNE.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

IMITATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY A LADY.

VOL. III.

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JULIA DE VIENNE.

JULIA's heart was heavily oppressed with sorrow, when she returned to Isabella: the unfortunate girl was walking slowly up and down the room, her arms crossed over her bosom, and her looks directed towards the floor. She did not seem at all aware of Julia's presence, and gave no answer to her affectionate inquiries.

"Isabella," said Julia in tears, "dearest Isabella, speak to me. Tell me, do you know me?"

Isabella turned her head, and stared wildly at her friend ; then approaching the window that looked towards the Castle of Florange, she held out both her arms. “ ‘Tis there, there,” she said in a hollow voice, and appeared attentively observing the place she had pointed out.

Julia pressed her friend to her heart, and endeavoured to draw her to the other end of the room.

“ Oh, the dungeon ! the dungeon !” said Isabella, with an accent that made Julia shudder ; “ do not drag me to the dungeon ! the walls are covered with blood—don’t you see the characters are written with blood—Oh, mercy ! mercy !” she added, falling on her knees.

Julia, almost distracted, increased her caresses, in the hope of appeasing her unfortunate friend's agitation. She knelt on the ground by her, called her by the most endearing names, and leaning her head on Isabella's palpitating bosom, allowed her tears to flow.

"Who are you?" at length, said Isabella, in a low voice; "you do me good—but tell me, is she gone? Will she never again return."

At this moment the door was opened by Bridget. Isabella screamed dreadfully on perceiving her, and covered her face with both her hands.

"Oh! leave the room," said Julia, in a supplicating tone: "in pity retire; your presence may destroy her."

"She must, however, accustom her-

self to it," replied Bridget, with perfect unconcern. "I am not come here to attend to her mad whims : the physician has sent word he will be with her in the evening, and I took the trouble of coming myself to tell you so."

Bridget then quitted the room, leaving the two deserted young creatures still on the ground, folded in each others arms ; and forming a picture which the most savage being in the creation could not have contemplated without emotion.

Poor Isabella seemed more calm—her eyes were closed ; and her arm, on which her head rested, was supported by the chair behind her. Slight convulsions agitated her limbs, but her countenance no longer exhibited that

gloomy, yet wild expression, which had so much terrified Julia.

"Oh, my friend!" said the latter, in tears, "dear and unfortunate girl, is it thus the happiness I had promised thee is realized?" then raising her eyes, with clasped hands, she said:— "Heavenly Father! whose power is infinite, and mercy incalculable, restore the health and understanding of this innocent and lovely creature."

During the remainder of the day, Isabella appeared tolerably tranquil, but did not utter a word; perfectly tractable to Julia's wishes, she peacefully accepted the medicines and food presented by her hand: but whenever she chanced to see Bridget, her screams

were dreadful : still the unfeeling woman persisted in forcing herself into the presence of the interesting sufferer, notwithstanding Julia's entreaties and tears.

Towards the evening, Isabella's respiration became short and convulsive : the encreased throbbing of her heart frightfully raised the handkerchief that covered her icy bosom. The physician again bled her, and Julia, attentive to every duty of friendship, held her arm during the operation.

" Oh ! 'tis blood, blood," exclaimed Isabella : she stared wildly at all the persons near her, and talked incessantly, although quite incoherently. Suddenly she started up, tore^{*} herself

from those who held her, escaped out of the room, and fled with incredible swiftness towards the park.

She was stopped at the entrance of the walk that led to the broken wall; but when she found they meant to prevent her from pursuing her way, she screamed dreadfully, and threw herself on the ground.

Julia hastened to her, and gently raising her, said in the most affectionate voice: —

“ Come, dearest Isabella, come with me.”

Isabella looked at her stedfastly, and quietly allowed herself to be conveyed back to the castle. “ Let us make haste,” she said, placing her lips close

to Julia's ear ; " walk fast, you know he is waiting for us."

On reaching her room, she did not appear to have the slightest recollection of any thing that had occurred ; and was placed in her bed, without opposing the least resistance to those who assisted to undress her.

Each day that followed this one produced nearly the same result. The unfortunate girl had entirely lost her senses, and the physician did not conceal from Julia his apprehensions ; not only, that her reason would never be restored, but that her life could not much longer be preserved.

" The shock this young creature has sustained," he added, " together with

the length of time she laid on the snow ; her cloaths and person saturated with water, have produced the most alarming consequences."

"Oh, sir ! is it then true that I must lose my friend !" exclaimed Julia, in the utmost grief. "Is there no resource, no expedient, can she not be saved ? May not her youth, time, and my unremitting attention produce—"

The physician shook his head, which prevented Julia from finishing the sentence : he raised his eyes towards heaven, and said :— "My dear young lady, the Almighty is omnipotent !" Julia but too well understood this observation, and wept bitterly.

"I do not say there is no hope," continued the physician, affected by

Julia's extreme grief; "I merely meant that there remains but little; and if I succeed in the object I so much desire, of checking those frightful convulsions, which I confess greatly alarm me, perhaps then her life may not be in danger."

"Do not abandon her, sir," said Julia, with increased affliction; "you are my only hope, my only consolation." Bridget at this moment entered the room, and the physician, who perfectly understood Julia, pressed her hand with kindness, and assured her he would see the invalid every day.

He strictly adhered to his promise, and Julia was soon convinced his judgment, as to her poor friend, was but too correct. The striking change

that took place over all the person of this deplorable victim to sorrow was most frightful: of her hitherto elegantly rounded figure nothing now remained but the absolute skeleton. Her large dark blue eyes, so sweetly expressive of gentleness and affection, either darted wild and gloomy looks around her, or were vacantly fixed on the floor: a livid paleness had succeeded the carnation that animated her countenance. Her features were distorted by convulsions, and her long auburn hair, until now braided up with so much care, fell in disorder over her forehead and shoulders: she sometimes yielded to Julia's wish, of being permitted to confine it with a net or ribbon; but the moment her friend

had finished her task, the poor insane girl tore the lovely tresses from her head, trampled them under her feet, and seemed to derive pleasure from the havoc and disorder she had produced.

Julia, always gentle, attentive, and kind, sedulously avoided whatever was likely to irritate her friend; she watched her sensations, and carefully led to, nay created, those which could tend to tranquillize her mind; and whenever she could find the opportunity, conversed with her of Henry.

Although Isabella did not seem to understand the discourse, yet she appeared more calm, and attentive, whenever this beloved name struck on her ear.

One evening, when Julia, more than usually alarmed at her friend's extreme agitation and fever, had in vain exhausted all the methods she had on similar occasions found successful, and was walking backwards and forwards in the room, part of her dress was caught on an arm of the chair, on which Isabella's guitar had been placed, and occasioned the instrument to fall at the feet of the lovely sufferer, who heretofore had drawn from its chords sounds equally harmonious and pathetic. The noise seemed at first to alarm her, but fixing her looks on the floor, she suddenly sprang towards the spot where the guitar laid, took it up, pressed it to her heart, and for some minutes examined it in silence.

"Dear Isabella," said Julia, going to her, "will you sing me one of those ballads I always hear with so much delight?"

Isabella, without answering, still kept her eyes on the instrument: in a few moments she placed her fingers on the strings, and shuddered at the sound produced by her touch.

"Henry!" she exclaimed, in a loud shrill voice, as if calling her lover: but instantly, by a transition so usual in that deplorable state of mental derangement, she smiled sweetly on Julia, and beckoned her to come nearer; and then leaning close to her ear, said:—

"I can't remember any more—my head burns—did you say he was listen-

ing? Well, well, well—I am going to sing."

In a low and plaintive voice, she began a ballad Henry had written for her, and adapted to one of the favourite airs of the province. She stopt suddenly, and the most brilliant colour animated her complexion. Her eyes sparkled with an almost supernatural splendour; she raised them towards heaven, and said with an accent that made Julia shudder:— "He is there! I hear his voice! he calls me. Henry, Henry! indeed, I will...." At this moment the door opened, and a young man dressed in mourning entered the room, uttered an exclamation of horror, and fell at Julia's feet.

" De Montmorency!" said Julia, in

a voice that surprise rendered scarcely audible.

"Oh, merciful God!" exclaimed the count, "enable me to bear this unexpected misery—oh, Julia is my—"

Julia was going to reply, but hearing a noise behind her, she hastily turned round, and perceived the unfortunate Isabella fainting on the floor.

She no longer thought of De Montmorency, or did she observe the baron, who had just entered the room, and expressed the same surprise his nephew had done, at finding Julia in the Castle of Font Romeu.

After trying in vain to raise her unfortunate friend, she looked at the count, who stood motionless from surprise, and excess of emotion, and said :—

" De Montmorency, you have killed my poor friend ! why did you come into her room so suddenly ? Did not that cruel woman, Bridget, tell you we have here an unfortunate young creature, whom excess of misery has deprived her of reason ; and that the slightest agitation or alarm might destroy her."

De Montmorency, almost stupified by the melancholy scene before him, and surprise at finding Julia in the castle, could not articulate one word in answer ; but the baron, rather more collected, raised Isabella in his arms, placed her in a chair, and Julia lavished on her friend every possible affectionate attention.

With his arm supporting the head of

the inanimate Isabella, and his eyes filled with tears, the baron addressed his nephew, saying :—“ Frederic, this, this is the dear child—does not your heart acknowledge her as a sister ? She is the image of your dear father, and my lamented brother.”

“ His sister ! ” exclaimed Julia, with astonishment : “ surely I did not rightly understand ! Isabella the sister of De Montmorency ? ”

“ Yes,” replied the baron, gravely, “ this is one of the countess’s shameful, nay, infamous actions ; wishing her son exclusively to possess all his father’s fortune, she caused her daughter, this lovely victim, to be carried away whilst still in her cradle, and had her placed here under a fictitious name. It was

reported in the family and household that the child had died at nurse. A little gold bribed to silence the mercenary woman, who nourished this innocent creature at her bosom ; and the unnatural mother confided this lovely flower to the care of the housekeeper of this place : she did not, however, confide to her the secret of the child's exalted birth, and only three days ago this dreadful secret was revealed : my guilty sister-in-law, on her death-bed, acknowledged by an authentic and legal act, that the young person brought up at Font Romeu under the name of Isabella, was in fact Cecilia Adeline de Montmorency, her legitimate daughter.

"After learning these particulars,

Frederic and myself lost not a moment, so anxious were we to restore a sister and niece to her fortune and rank. "Alas!" continued the baron, sighing, "we little expected to find the injured child in this sad, sad state."

Julia clasped her hands together, and raising her eyes towards heaven, only said:—"Dear, lovely, unfortunate girl."

Isabella at length gradually recovered from her fainting fit; she looked around her, and although there did not appear any symptom of derangement on her countenance, yet the languid, wandering roll of her eyes too plainly expressed that her mental faculties were very nearly extinct.

She seemed to be attentively exa-

mining De Montmorency, although she shuddered when looking at him, and did not utter a word.

"My dear sister!" said the count, pressing her emaciated hand in both of his.

"His sister!" said Isabella, in a deep low voice. "He used to call me his sister; but this is not him! ah, no—no! this is not him!" and she again closed her eyes.

Bridget, who had observed the extreme interest which the lord of the castle took in the situation of Isabella, impatiently waited at the chamber door for permission to enter, anxious now to shew every attention to the poor invalid to whom a few minutes before she had not deigned to offer even the

common duties of humanity. Some expressions of the count to his uncle, on their arrival, created suspicions in her mind, which gave her the most serious uneasiness. "Can it be possible," she thought, "that the young child, which the countess confided to my care, with strict orders to adopt her as my niece; can be—no, no—that cannot—My lady could not abandon her own child! my fears are unfounded." At this moment De Montmorency's exclamation struck her ear: she no longer doubted Isabella's birth; her unfeeling, nay inhuman conduct to the poor girl, rushed upon her recollection, and she shuddered with apprehension.

Julia, anxious to obtain for Isabella

that quietness which was the only preventive to the return of her dreadful paroxysms, entreated De Montmorency and the baron to leave the room.

Bridget, hearing her call the servant to assist her in placing her still inanimate friend in bed, ventured to open the door, and respectfully inquired of Julia her commands.

" You well know," said Julia, with indignation, " that your presence always alarms and agitates my friend. Instantly, *retire*; at a proper opportunity, your conduct to the sister of your lord shall be made known to him."

Bridget turned pale, and without raising her eyes from the ground, left the room. De Montmorency and the baron immediately followed her, and

Julia, together with the servant she had called, remained with Isabella.

"Where is he?" said the latter, in a faint voice. "Why does he leave me? Those black, mourning cloaths please me; but tell him to wipe off the spots of blood: see, he has left the stain of it on my hand. He called me his sister; did he not?... His sister!" she repeated mournfully. Her head drooped, and she became silent.

"Come, dear Isabella," said Julia, embracing her, "come to bed; you are fatigued, and sleep will do you good."

"Yes," replied Isabella, "sleep.... an eternal sleep--and I shall rest with him!" then disengaging herself from her friend's arms, she exclaimed:--

"Oh ! remove those dreadful weapons of destruction ; they are preparing for battle : take away those dead bodies, and that frightful bloody standard. Oh ! Julia, Julia," she added, falling on her friend's bosom, "save me, save me ; do not forsake me."

Julia most affectionately caressed her, and experienced a slight emotion of pleasure, for this was the first time Isabella had appeared to know her since her illness : neither had she until now addressed her by her name, and from these little circumstances she indulged some hope.

Isabella, after getting into bed, soon sunk into a slumber ; and by her livid paleness, and discoloured lips, one

might easily have imagined her to be indeed in an eternal sleep.

De Montmorency, accompanied by the baron, now returned to the room ; they both seated themselves close to Julia, and in a low voice conversed of the events that had occurred since their separation.

De Montmorency with difficulty restrained himself from uttering ejaculations of indignation at the recital of Julia's sufferings ; neither did Julia, without experiencing infinite pain, hear the cruel calumnies by which her conduct had been aspersed.

"But we are once more united," said De Montmorency, affectionately ; "and no human power shall now prevent my happiness."

"Dearest Frederic," said Julia, sighing, "speak not of happiness; my heart will never be susceptible of any so long as this sweet sufferer remains in her present deplorable situation."

That affliction brought back De Montmorency's and the baron's ideas to the unfortunate Isabella: Julia related to them her history, and the melancholy fate of her beloved Henry. They were infinitely affected at the recital; the baron especially could with difficulty command himself; the fear of awaking his niece, and causing a fatal crisis, alone prevented him from allowing his rage to evaporate, by the utterance of some of his favourite imprecations.

"This is," said he, muttering between
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his teeth, and speaking of the countess, "this is the work of what the world calls a respectable woman, a woman of virtue: virtue indeed! but where was her heart, to carry a lovely creature for months in her bosom, bring it, without its consent, into a world full of misery, then cast it from her, innocent and unprotected as it was, and deprive it of its birth-right, and all the relative affections of human nature. Shame on society, for tolerating such barbarity, whilst its rigid rules condemns an unmarried mother to perpetual ignominy, if her natural affection is more powerful than her worldly prudence, and she dares to protect the offspring of illegitimate affection. I always hated that woman, but now,

when I see the effects of her ambition and cruelty, my heart recoils at the idea of her; and then, that jade, Bridget—I tell you what, my boy, she shall decamp this very moment."

On saying which the impetuous old gentleman rose from his seat, with the full intention of turning Bridget out of the castle, but was stopped by De Montmorency, who said :—

" Be assured, my dear sir, that I feel as much displeasure as you do against this worthless woman; but we shall require her testimony to verify my sister's rights; she only can prove her personal identity, and——"

" The devil take her and her testimony," said the baron, with fury, then resuming a calmer tone, he added :

"Are you not convinced, boy, that Isabella is your sister? As to myself, I require no other proof than her perfect resemblance to her father. Now I beg to know the use of the testimony you talk about."

"To prove in an incontestable and legal manner," replied De Montmorency, "that Isabella is in fact the same girl who my mother confided to Bridget's care: indeed, my dear uncle, we ought to prevent the possibility of any chicanery, which in the event of my sister surviving me may be practised against her; and it is this idea that induces me to urge the propriety of our using every formality the law may require."

The good sense of this last observa-

tion struck the baron, and he did not again venture to oppose his nephew, but quietly replaced himself on his chair, and attentively listened to the conversation of De Montmorency and Julia. The effusion of their reciprocal affection was tempered by the melancholy situation of poor Isabella. Julia never withdrew her looks from the bed, on which was laid the mournful object of her solicitude. Her eyes, overflowing with tears, and the deep sighs that incessantly escaped from her bosom, shewed how acutely her heart felt for her unfortunate friend.

"Oh, Frederic!" she said, "if you had been acquainted with her—if you knew, as I do, how infinitely she deserves to be loved, your grief would

be indeed severe, at having found such a sister, only at the moment when perhaps you must lose her for ever."

"Do you think we shall lose her?" said the baron, greatly agitated. At this moment Isabella uttered a plaintive moan. Julia flew to her, and opening the bed curtains, found the unfortunate girl still slumbering; but frightful convulsions agitated her limbs, and her face was bathed in tears.

"She weeps," exclaimed Julia with delight; "this is the first time since her illness that I have seen her shed tears. Oh, Almighty and most merciful God! have my prayers been heard? Shall I at length see my wretched friend restored to health and reason?

The physician," she added, more calmly, " told me that if such a crisis as this occurred, we might indulge some hope."

The baron and De Montmorency drew near the bed, but at Julia's request they seated themselves behind the curtains, to prevent their being seen by Isabella when she awoke.

They all remained thus silently watching the beautiful flower before them, who, in the bud of life, was withering on its stalk, the principles of its existence destroyed by a venomous wound, not immediately mortal, yet altogether incurable.

Nearly an half hour passed in total silence; the tears still rolled down Isabella's cheeks, and unintelligible

words escaped from her livid lips : at length she breathed a deep sigh, opened her eyes, and perceiving Julia, held out her hand towards her.

"Where am I, dear friend?" she said. "Oh! how dreadfully weary I am."

Julia pressed her to her heart, and could not restrain her tears.

"You weep," continued Isabella. "What has happened to you? Why am I thus in my bed? Ah! Julia, my head aches sadly; I have had a very, very frightful dream."

Julia's spirits and heart were sadly depressed, and she with difficulty restrained her sobs.

"Let us not talk of your dream, dear Isabella," she said; "I have

very important news to communicate to you."

"News!" replied Isabella, raising her head, and supporting it with one of her hands. "News! did you say? Ah! it is concerning my dear Henry. Tell me—I don't know what it is that so strangely disorders my memory; it seems as if—"

Julia interrupted her, by saying:—

"How should you feel if you were to be told you are not Bridget's niece, and that relations born in the superior class of society are anxious to acknowledge and lavish on you the most affectionate proofs of their regard?"

"Oh! I should greatly rejoice, because then I may be united to my Henry," said the lovely girl; "my

beloved Henry!" she added, "but that dream—that frightful dream, it has chilled my heart. Dearest Julia, explain to me one thing I cannot comprehend—I am all over in pain, and my head is so weak, that my disordered and unconnected ideas perpetually escape me. Have I not been very ill? Even now, my brain wanders sadly, and I cannot explain what I wish to say; yet when the curate left us yesterday, I felt so well—so very happy."

Isabella pronounced the last words in a tone of voice so gentle and affecting, that Julia, no longer able to command herself, melted into tears. De Montmorency covered his face with both hands, and a deep sigh escaped from the bosom of the good old baron.

"What do I hear!" said Isabella : "is there any person in the room? Ah! Julia," she added, in a whisper, "if it is Bridget, we are lost."

"Fear nothing, dear and sweet friend," said Julia ; "the worthless woman you have just named will never more appear in your presence ; your relations have ordered her to leave the castle."

"My relations!" said Isabella, with surprise ; then, after reflecting for a few moments, she added : "Yes, I recollect you told me I had relations ; but you must mention their names, whilst I still retain my memory, for I much fear....oh, my head—my head," she added, placing her hand on her forehead.

"Do you remember having heard me speak of De Montmorency?" said Julia.

"Yes," replied Isabella, with quickness.

"Well then," continued Julia, "he is your brother, and you are the legitimate daughter of the Count and Countess de Montmorency."

Isabella's mind was totally abstracted; she did not seem to pay any attention to Julia's last explanation.

The name De Montmorency had given birth to recollections which she was endeavouring to follow the course of: suddenly she gave a dreadful scream, and her head fell back on her pillow.

"My friend, my dear Isabella!" exclaimed Julia, trembling.

"No! it is not possible," said Isabella, "it is not possible that it was a dream — that dreadful circumstance could not be a dream. Julia," she added, mournfully, "tell me, is it true that I have been to the grotto? Did I find a letter there? Was that letter—?"

It was impossible for her to conclude the sentence: convulsive sobs, or rather a frightful suffocation, stifled her voice; but her eyes remained fixed on Julia's face, as if imploring an answer.

Julia, shuddering at the idea of conveying to her friend's soul the dreadful conviction of an irremediable mis-

fortune, turned pale, and looking down, remained silent.

"I understand you," said Isabella in a faint voice ; "I—I understand you, but in mercy withdraw—leave me—oh! leave me."

"My Isabella," exclaimed Julia, "is it possible that my presence can annoy you? Allow me——"

"Do not call me your Isabella," said the unfortunate girl, in an accent of despair. "Are you not fearful that your affection for such a very wretched being as I am should also cause your death? Go, go from me: in the name of heaven, allow me to be alone."

Julia joined her hands together, and raised her eyes, as if to supplicate her

friend to allow her to remain with her ; but there was an expression so sublime in Isabella's looks and gestures, that she dared not resist her will. She therefore closed the bed curtains, and motioning to the baron and De Montmorency to follow her, she quitted the room.

Her extreme anxiety prevented her from going farther than the door, on the outside of which she attentively listened to the slightest noise in the room : but all remaining quiet, they went into a small dressing-room adjoining Isabella's chamber.

" My Julia," said De Montmorency, in a low voice, " endeavour to calm this agitation ; it agonizes my heart."

" Dear Frederic," replied Julia,

" pardon me, if at this awful moment I devote myself exclusively to my unfortunate friend: but my heart is not the less grateful for the blessing of our re-union. Alas! what would have become of me—alone here, sinking under the excess of my sorrow, without means, without a hope of ever being able to convey to you the assurance of my unalterable attachment, for indeed this heart which I gave to you will never be another's. I repeat it to you without blushing, in the presence of your uncle, that respected friend who will sanction our affection. Yes, Frederic, it is in his hands I deposit the oath to be your's only until my death."

De Montmorency, nearly frantic with

joy, knelt down, and seizing one of Julia's hands, conveyed it to his lips. The baron took the other, pressed it between both of his, and much affected, said :—

“ Dear amiable Julia, with a grateful heart I accept this proof of your confidence, and I promise, sacredly promise, in return, to encompass you with care and solicitude of the tenderest and most sincerely zealous friend : I hope ere long the closest ties will unite us, for great indeed will be my satisfaction and pride, when I can call you by the endearing name of niece. May heaven in its mercy also preserve the one I have so lately found.”

“ Ah, sir !” replied Julia, a tear escaping from each eye-lash, “ I know

my friend—I am certain she will not survive her Henry, unless the loss of reason should once more divest her mind of the consciousness of her irreparable misfortune, and then, what a sad, a melancholy existence."

A solemn silence followed this last reflection, which the baron broke, by proposing their return to Isabella's room. Julia assured him her unfortunate friend was not in a situation to sustain such an interview.

"To-morrow," she added, "I will again speak to her of you, sir, and her brother, and will try to obtain permission to introduce you both; but suffer me to remain alone with her to-night."

De Montmorency approved of Julia's precaution; the baron, not daring to

resist, accompanied his nephew to the room prepared for them.

Julia, with great gentleness, half opened the door of Isabella's chamber, and discovered her poor friend on her knees near a table, on which several papers were scattered.

Isabella was mournfully contemplating them; she sometimes stretched out her hand to take them, then suddenly drew it back, shuddered, and placing it on her heart, continued silently to examine them.

Julia, motionless on the place where she stood, dared not advance one step, although the painful spectacle before her greatly increased the misery she had before experienced.

Soon, however, her fears lest the

wretched Isabella, nearly without cloathing, in so severe a season, prostrated on the cold marble squares with which her room was floored, should once more be reduced to the same sufferings she had been the victim, owing to her having laid so long in the snow, gave her courage to advance nearer to her friend. She shuddered as she approached her, and had nearly fainted, when Isabella turning towards her, said in a voice almost extinct, whilst placing her hands on the papers:—

“Look for it, Julia—find it, and—give it—to me—that I may expire on again reading that last——”

She could not conclude the sentence. Julia but too well understood her: she

had kept the last fatal letter from the unfortunate Henry, and had determined for ever to conceal it from her friend's sight : she threw her arms round Isabella, entreated her to rise, and took hold of her hand to assist her to a chair, but that cold hand repulsed her offer.

" Give me Henry's last letter," said Isabella in a tone of voice that conveyed awe and terror into Julia's soul. She looked at the unfortunate young creature who so impressively addressed her, and her alarm and agony encreased. Isabella was partly concealed by the covering she had dragged with her from the bed ; her face was of a death-like paleness ; her lean hands were strongly clasped together, and

she fixed on Julia her heretofore lovely eyes, whose now gloomy, wild, yet menacing expression, it was impossible to endure.

"Oh, my God! my God!" exclaimed Julia, trembling, "is this my friend? Is this the sweet, gentle Isabella whom I now see? Am I not in my turn the victim to a frightful delirium?"

"Henry is dead," said Isabella in a doleful voice. "Henry is dead, and you refuse me his last farewell: cruel, cruel Julia!"

"No!" exclaimed Julia, overcome by her friend's despair, "no, I will no longer refuse it to you: here it is," she added, depositing the fatal paper in Isabella's hand, then concealing

her face with her handkerchief, she leaned against the wall, and gave herself up to all the bitterness of her affliction.

A profound silence had succeeded to the last dreadful discourse. Julia, a little composed, again fixed her looks on her friend, and very soon it became impossible to withdraw them from her.

Isabella's countenance had resumed that affecting melancholy which characterised it before the loss of her reason. A celestial calm seemed to be spread over her whole person; her eyes, rivetted on Henry's writing, were wet with tears, and her moving lips articulated in a low voice the last words of her unfortunate lover.

Julia hastened to her, and silently

offered her hand to assist her to rise ; Isabella turned her eyes towards her friend, shook her head, and in a faint voice said :—

“ My strength fails me . . . I am dying.”

Julia gave a dreadful scream, made another effort, and succeeded in raising the dear and almost lifeless girl in her arms.

“ The grotto,” added Isabella, “ at the entrance of the grotto I wish my body to be laid ; it is there I died ! it is there Henry——”

Julia was going to interrupt her friend, but suddenly the precious burthen she supported slipped from her hands, fell on the ground, drawing her with it.

Isabella ! Oh, my dear Isabella !” exclaimed Julia, but Isabella no longer heard her : the last spark of life was extinct; her last sigh had evaporated in pronouncing the name of Henry.

Julia, although nearly distracted, could not yet believe she had lost, for ever lost, her beloved friend ; she imagined a fainting fit rendered her thus motionless, and anxiously endeavoured to administer the usual means of relief. She called the servants, placed Isabella on her bed, and bathed her livid and disfigured face with volatile spirits, but when she wished to take one of her friend’s hands, she found it shut, and perceived between the stiff icy fingers of this victim to sensibility and

affection the letter written with Henry's blood, which no effort could release from her grasp."

"Let it alone, do not touch it," said Julia to the female who was attempting to draw the paper from Isabella's clenched fingers; "let us try to restore her to life."

At this moment the baron and De Montmorency entered the room.

"She is dead! she is dead!" were the dreadful words that sounded in Julia's ears. She gave a heart-rending shriek, and throwing herself on the inanimate body of her friend, pressed it in her arms, saying wildly:—

"She is not dead; my sweet Isabella! my companion! my beloved sister!"

Julia could not finish the sentence ; she felt some one raise her from the bed, and entirely lost all consciousness.

When she recovered, she found herself in the parlour ; De Montmorency was on his knees watching her recovery with the utmost anxiety, whilst the baron held her hand in his.

“ Oh, De Montmorency ! ” she exclaimed—her tears and sobs prevented her from proceeding.

The night was already far advanced, but no one thought of sleep. Julia, notwithstanding De Montmorency’s ardent entreaties, returned to the chamber of death, where she constantly remained until the period of Isabella’s interment.

When the mournful day arrived,

Julia, pale, silent, and dejected, presided at all the funeral ceremonies. Before the coffin was closed, which would for ever deprive her of her friend, she cut a lock of her own hair, and placed it on Isabella's icy bosom.

"Ill-fated girl, who art now indeed the angel I ever thought thee," said she in a tone of voice that drew tears from all those who heard her. "I wish at least a part of myself to accompany thee to thy tomb."

De Montmorency, although against her will, dragged her out of the room, and confided her to the care of Ximeno's mother, who had been some days at the castle, and then attended the remains of his sister to the place she had chosen for her grave.

A simple monument of white marble was erected on the spot, on which was engraved, by Julia's orders, in letters of gold this modest epitaph:—
Sacred to the manes of Henry and Isabella.

Weeping willows and mourning cypresses covered with ~~thin~~ ^{their foliage} foilage this last refuge for misery; and the cascade that fell over the cliff added by its monotonous and plaintive murmur to the melancholy sensations this wild and romantic spot never failed to create in the bosom of sensibility.

Julia determined to wear mourning for Isabella as long as if she had been really her sister: a settled melancholy dwelt on her countenance: she could not without deep affliction think on the

friend she had lost. Isabella was the only one of her sex from whom she had received proofs of sincere regard. She compared her gentle, affectionate manners with the harshness of Madame de Seligny ; Louisa's cold indifference ; and the capricious self-love of her convent companions. Each recollection made her heart palpitate with gratitude and regret ; and the memory of the sweet, unsophisticated Isabella, was for a long time both the consolation and torment of her existence.

Whatever had belonged to that so sincerely beloved friend became in her estimation sacred. She requested De Montmorency to give orders that the chamber was never to be inhabited, where Isabella had breathed her last sigh.

Julia inquired for Sylvio, but the affectionate animal, who had attended the funeral procession, laid down at the foot of his mistress's grave, from which he would not stir. The servants in vain tried, both by caresses and threats, to attract him to the castle: he answered their attempts with groans, and even refused the sustenance carried to him. Three days he remained at the grave of his mistress; on the morning of the fourth Julia determined herself to remove him to the castle, and leaning on De Montmorency's arm, walked to her friend's tomb. Sylvio on perceiving her languidly raised his head, crawled towards her, and mournfully licked her feet; he then turned round, sniffed the earth that covered the re-

mains of Isabella, and again moaned most piteously. As neither De Montmorency nor Julia could induce him to leave this melancholy spot, they reluctantly returned to the castle. In the evening they were informed that Sylvio had expired on the place where they had left him, and by De Montmorency's orders, this truly attached and faithful animal was buried at the foot of his beloved mistress's grave.

When Julia's grief was a little moderated, and her mind in some measure withdrawn from the afflicting loss she had sustained, De Montmorency spoke of his love, and entreated her to fix the period when his hopes of happiness would be realized.

"My dear Frederic," said Julia

sighing, "this mourning garb we both wear very ill accords with the idea of marriage and happiness; besides, the poor orphan whom you wish to honour with the title of your wife, although sensible of, and beyond all description grateful for, the sacrifice you intend to make for her, cannot dispose of herself without the sanction of her few remaining relations, and——"

"And do you," said De Montmorency, interrupting her with warmth, "do you suppose I will submit to the caprices of the insolent woman who treated you so inhumanly? Do you expect me quietly and patiently to wait until she once more takes you from me? Has she not forfeited all claims to your respect, all rights over you, by her

depravity in leaving you here for the last six months? Are we not certain that my refusing to marry her stupid daughter has mortified her pride, and that consequently she will revenge herself on you, whom she accuses of alienating my mind from the advantages of so wealthy a connexion? Surely, my Julia, you have seen enough of that woman's disposition to be convinced she will go all lengths to injure, nay, destroy you. My heart shudders when I think of your danger from her malice and revenge: recollect the all-powerful influence of riches: how easily may she obtain a *lettre de cachet*, when you would be dragged from me, and immured in some remote convent, which perhaps I might never discover,

and where you would wear out the remainder of your life in regret and tears. Great God ! the mere idea upsets my reason : my Julia," he added affectionately, " give me a husband's right to protect you, then neither sorrow or insult shall ever reach you : in my arms forget all, but that you are the idolized wife of him who will live but to anticipate your wishes, adore and bless you. Allow me then, my beloved, at once to present to society its brightest ornament, in the young and lovely Countess de Montmorency."

Julia, alarmed at the idea of being torn from her Frederic, and confined perhaps for life in a convent, cast down her eyes, and in a trembling voice said :—

"I too well know how capable my cruel aunt is of realizing the frightful picture you have drawn. I will not therefore wait for her sanction to our union. De Montmorency," she added, placing her hand in his, "I am yours for ever. Allow your kind and respected uncle to name the period when" She blushed, and could not conclude the sentence.

"My Julia," my own adored Julia!" exclaimed the count, "I will instantly fly to my uncle: we will together kneel at your feet, and then he will fix the day on which I shall become the most blest of men."

De Montmorency hastened out of the room, near the door of which he met the baron. He took hold of his arm, led him to Julia, then dropping

on his knees before her, said in a voice his extreme emotion rendered scarcely distinct :—

“ Uncle, my dear uncle, she consents to be mine ; you are to fix the period when I shall.... oh, say to-morrow, to-day. Julia, my adored Julia,” he added, covering with kisses the hand she presented to induce him to rise, “ no, I will never quit this position until you tell me when you will be all my own.”

“ Lovely Julia,” said the baron greatly affected, “ consent this evening to crown your lover’s.. let me to-night,” he added, dashing away a tear that rolled over his furrowed cheek, “ when I retire to rest, implore the Almighty to bless my nephew and my niece.”

Julia looked down, and the sweetest blushes of real modesty crimsoned her lovely countenance. Affection, delicacy, and fear, combatted in her bosom, and each alternately conquered; but the idea of Madame de Seligny, her apprehension of a *lettre de cachet*, subdued every other sensation, and she resolved to listen only to the dictates of prudence.

" You are the arbiter of my fate, sir," she said timidly, looking at the baron, and I submit to your orders. Deign to be a father to the poor orphan whom you have so highly honoured. Alas ! those who ought to protect, unfeelingly repulse me from their hearts, and only assert their rights of consanguinity, to plunge me deeper in-

to misery.’’ A few pearly drops escaped from Julia’s eyes, which De Montmorency, whose joy almost mounted to delirium, tenderly kissed away.

The baron now explained to his nephew and Julia the steps he had taken relative to them since his arrival at Font Romeu.

“ As the parties were agreed,” said he smilingly, “ I took upon myself to write to Chevalier d’Aubigny, requesting his consent to your marriage. That gallant old officer, retired from the army, now peaceably wears his laurels, and himself farms a little estate he possesses in the neighbourhood of Privas. He with gratitude and delight, to use his own words, commits his

niece's happiness to your care, my dear boy, and laments his inability to take so long a journey, otherwise he would personally bestow his blessing on your union. He concludes his letter with prayers for your uninterrupted felicity. I have also obtained the Bishop d'Oleron's dispensation, and the notary, who received that Jade Didgeot's deposition, has drawn the marriage settlement, &c. so you see, my dear children, we have nothing now to do but to give notice to the Curate of Font Romeu, and I am this moment going to send off an express to the good old man."

At six o'clock in the evening Frederic and Julia received the nuptial benediction, in the ancient chapel, be-

longing to the castle. Ximeo, his father, and two servants, witnessed the ceremony; after which the delighted baron pressed to his heart the two beings in the world most dear to him.

Julia, in a simple white dress, her beautiful hair restrained from falling over her face and shoulders by a net of the same colour, looked so enchantingly lovely, that De Montmorency in ecstasy exclaimed, when he turned his eyes on her :—

“ She is mine ! she is mine for ever ! Oh ! my dear uncle, what do I not owe to you ! you induced me to come here, and hurried me on to unlooked for happiness ; but for you I might have delayed my journey, might have deput-

ed another to——” He stopped on perceiving a tear glisten in his bride’s eyes, at the recollection of the cause of his journey to Font Romeu, and he finished the sentence, by saying:— “ To you, dear sir, am I indebted for the power I possess, of thus exultingly calling this angelic creature my wife.”

De Montmorency was correct in his fears relative to Madame de Seligny’s intentions towards her niece; for the next day, as the baron, Julia, and himself, were conversing after dinner, a post-chaise drove into the court yard, and a servant announced Madame Dumont.

The woman, a little disconcerted at finding Julia in society with two per-

sons whom she did not expect to see, was for a moment doubtful how to act: but she soon recovered herself sufficiently to present a letter to Julia, saying:—

“This, madam, is from your aunt, who commands you immediately to accompany me.”

Julia took the letter, hastily ran over its contents, and without speaking a word, gave it to De Montmorency, whose agitation was so excessive on hearing the message brought by Madame Dumont, that he with difficulty restrained himself from ordering her instantly to leave the castle.

The good but impetuous baron, less able to command his temper, took her by the arm, and was conducting her to

the door, when he was stopped by his nephew, who said :—

“ Do, my dear sir, read Madame de Seligny’s letter : this woman merely executes her mistress’s orders, and we shall want her to carry back our answer.”

The baron, wholly unable to contain his rage, tore the letter out of his nephew’s hand, and in a loud voice read the following words :—

“ You are, on receipt of this, to accompany Madame Dumont, who has orders to convey you without any delay to a convent at Tarbes, where, if you take the veil, you may be happy, as I shall, in that event, add an annuity of one hundred crowns to the sum I am to pay for your board, &c. If you persist in your dislike to a reli-

gious life, I shall abandon you for ever; and I beg you clearly to understand, that you need never solicit, or expect, any kindness whatever from

“ T. de Seligny.”

“ Oh, the vile jade !” exclaimed the baron, “ but I will soon....”

“ Tell your mistress,” said De Montmorency, interrupting his uncle, and proudly addressing Madame Dumont ; “ that Julia d’Aubigny no longer exists ; but inform her, that the Countess De Montmorency, my wife, declines her generous offers : you will please also to add our hope of being in future spared the unpleasant task of answering her letters. You may now retire.”

Madame Dumont was so overcome by her surprise, that she could not instantly obey ; but when the same order was repeated in a less gentle tone by the baron, she silently withdrew, intending to enter the same carriage that had brought her to the castle, which Julia prevented, by ringing for a servant, whom she directed to offer Madame Dumont both refreshment and rest, after her long, and, as it turned out, fruitless journey.

“ Dearest Frederic,” she said, affectionately pressing her husband’s hand, “ what would have become of me, if I....” here she hesitated, and crimson blushes suffused her cheeks, when she continued :—“ If I had not been your’s, my cruel aunt would certainly——”

The count interrupted Julia, to bestow on her the most endearing expressions, whilst the baron was hastily walking backwards and forwards in the room, endeavouring to calm the storm that agitated his spirits. The violent imprecations which rapidly succeeded each other, all directed against Madame de Seligny, insensibly produced the desired effect, and in a short time the old gentleman, with his usual good-humour, seated himself by his beloved niece.

The count and his lovely bride felt the most sincere gratitude to this worthy relative, who on every occasion acted towards them with a father's affection. They consulted him with regard to their future plan of life, and

it was arranged, that after passing another month at Font Romeu, they should go to Paris, where Julia, presiding over a splendid establishment, would enjoy all the consideration due to the new rank she was about to fill in the fashionable world. This prospect, so enchanting to female youth, made her heart palpitate. She would then have a house of her own, superb equipages, boxes at all the theatres, and be presented at court. No more humiliations, no more sorrows: the modest, unaffected, unknown Julia d'Aubigny was now lost in the young, magnificent, and beautiful Countess de Montmorency, whom every one would admire and receive with the respect and consideration which is always lavished on rank or riches. Oh! how infinitely

did these infatuating anticipations add to the brilliancy of Julia's naturally expressive eyes, when she fixed her looks on her husband, who was intoxicated with her beauty ! he fancied he read in them only ardent affection, and thought he possessed that first of all earthly blessings, the exclusive love of the being he adored, and to whom he had given his undivided heart.

The period fixed upon for their departure at length arrived. Julia, whose every wish was anticipated by her doating husband, had now every wish that ambition and vanity could suggest completely gratified. Her happiness rendered her so amiable, her conversation and manners were so infatuating, that the baron each moment congratu-

iated himself on having united his nephew to a woman who seemed the most perfect of her sex.

Nevertheless, when they were leaving Font Romeu, the recollection of Isabella, the interesting and lovely victim to feeling and affection, cast a few dark clouds over Julia's countenance. She once more desired Berther, who had succeeded Bridget as house-keeper of the castle, not to allow any one to enter the room where her unfortunate friend had breathed her last sigh ; and charged her to be mindful that the avenue of cypress trees, which had been planted from the park gate to Isabella's tomb, was carefully kept in repair ; then, after presenting Ximeo with a liberal recompense for his faith-

ful attachment to Henry and Isabella, she, accompanied by De Montmorency and the baron, stepped into the carriage that was to convey her to, as she imagined, the centre of unalloyed pleasure and felicity.

When they had passed over the ancient bridge of the castle, she turned her head, gave a last look at the gothic windows in the room of her ill-fated friend, and a sigh evaporated from her bosom. But the rapidity of the horses, and the windings of the valley, soon caused these melancholy objects to disappear, and Julia, fancying she read in her husband's eyes a gentle reproach for thus yielding to unpleasant reflections, made an effort to regain her usual cheerfulness.

On the morning of the fifth day since their departure from Font Romeu, when our travellers had entered the Forest of Orleans, they observed a carriage broken down in the middle of the road, at some distance from which, a man, muffled up in a large cloak, was walking backwards and forwards with hurried steps, evidently to protect himself from the cold, and now and then looking towards his chariot, which was half concealed in a deep wheel rut. The wind whistled through the branches of the almost leafless but majestic trees on each side of the road, and the rain fell in torrents. Julia, moved with compassion, for the very unpleasant position of the unfortunate traveller, let down one of

the windows, and ordered one of the servants, who attended the carriage on horseback, to offer his services to assist the stranger.

De Montmorency, leaning forward to draw up the glass, uttered an exclamation of surprise, on perceiving the object of his wife's solicitude:—

“ ‘Tis him—’tis De Courcy ! Why, my poor chevalier, what in the name of fortune are you doing there ?”

“ Rather say misfortunes,” replied the young man ; “ for I was shivering with cold, and cursing the awkwardness of my postillion, for placing me in the very disagreeable predicament in which you see me ; but now I thank heaven for sending you so opportunely to my

relief : take pity on me, my dear friend, in charity give me a corner in....”

At this moment a turn of De Montmorency’s head allowed the chevalier to observe Julia : he gracefully bowed to her, and was so much struck with admiration and surprise, that he could not conclude the sentence.

“ By my faith,” said the baron, smiling, “ it must be owned that the chevalier’s present situation is not a very delectable one ; there is room enough for him with us, and one of our people can guard his carriage until his own servant returns.”

De Montmorency immediately invited his friend to take a seat in the carriage. De Courcy hesitated to accept

the offer, until Julia added her entreaties to those of her husband, when he took advantage of their kind invitation, after throwing off his cloak, which was soaked with rain.

The chevalier placed himself opposite to Julia, whose lovely face still continued to rivet his attention.

M. de Courcy was the same Knight of Malta whom Julia had seen at St. Louis, a few days after her arrival there. He served in the same regiment of guards in which De Montmorency had the rank of captain. Some family affairs requiring his presence in Poitou, he had on the evening before left Paris, and was now on his way to that fertile province.

"I am now of opinion," said the

chevalier, with a smile, which allowed a set of the finest teeth in the world to be seen, “that I ought to bless my postillion for having fractured my carriage, since to that accident I am indebted for the pleasure of meeting my best friend.”

De Montmorency did not reply to this speech : the attention with which the chevalier examined Julia displeased him : indeed, Julia herself was a little disconcerted by his scrutiny : she blushed, cast down her eyes, and with an affectation of interest which she assumed to conceal her confusion, said :—

“I hope, sir, you have not received any injury from the——”

De Montmorency, interrupting his wife, said, addressing the chevalier :—

"By the bye, De Courcy, we are taking you quite out of your way; shall we return with you to Blois, for that I believe is the last town you have passed?"

"I should be quite miserable," replied the chevalier, "to be the means of deranging the plan of your journey; besides, my servant is gone to Orleans, to fetch proper workmen to repair my carriage, and it is my intention to remain there until it has been examined, and I am convinced it can convey me without danger to the end of my journey."

De Montmorency answered by an inclination of the head, but the baron, who was naturally fond of talking,

began a conversation with De Courcy, in which the latter exhibited so refined a judgment, a mind and sentiments so truly delicate, yet manly, and so extensive a knowledge of the world and human nature, that the transient cloud on De Montmorency's brow was insensibly dispersed. He resumed a kind and familiar manner towards his friend, begged him, when he returned from Poitou, to consider the Hotel de Montmorency as his home; and, in short, shewed him every mark of friendship and attachment.

They remained together at Orleans until the next morning, when the chevalier in a hired post-chaise, his own chariot being materially damaged,

continued his route; and the carriage of our travellers took the road to the metropolis.

The night was far advanced when they reached the suburbs of Paris. A profound silence had succeeded the confused noise which during the day always fills the streets of that immense city, and was only interrupted by the monotonous chiming of the convent clocks: but when they reached that part of the town called the *Quartier du Palais Royal*, a considerable number of carriages were still in motion, rapidly passing each other, throwing to a great distance a brilliant light, issuing from the flambeaux carried by servants in the most splendid liveries. Julia never having passed

the gates of her convent, until the day when she accompanied the De Seligny family to the Chateau de St. Louis, the scene and objects now before her filled her mind with surprise and delight. Paris and its luxuries, in every species of which it in 1758 so pre-eminently excelled every city in Europe, presented a spectacle from which she could not withdraw her attention. She was silently reflecting on her fortunate position, and was enjoying by anticipation the pleasures she was about to taste in the fashionable world, when the carriage entered the court yard of a superb house, in the *Rue de Richlieu*.

It drew up at the bottom of a flight of steps, ornamented on each side with

white marble vases. Several livery servants, holding flambeaux, were in waiting at the hall door; and Julia, leaning on her husband's arm, followed by his uncle, triumphantly entered the mansion, of which she was the happy mistress. The count conducted her through several rooms, lighted by crystal chandeliers, on their way to the supper room, which was an octagon parlour, the sides of which were stuccoed, and clothed with magnificent pictures.

"Is it possible," thought Julia, "is it really possible, that this beautiful place is mine!"

The sweetest carnation tinted her cheeks; her heart palpitated with delight: she raised her eyes, over-

flowing with tenderness and gratitude, towards her husband's face, and gave him a look he instantly understood, and replied to, by protestations of eternal love and devotion.

Fondly leaning on De Montmorency's arm, she continued with indescribable satisfaction, to examine the splendid furniture of the room, and the admirable pictures that adorned it: an exclamation of:— “Oh, my dearest Frederic!” escaped her, on discovering in one of the portraits the same likeness of her husband, as Cupid adolescent, which she had formerly mistaken for a representation of St. Sebastian. The picture had, however, been altered, for instead of his being occupied in selecting arrows from his

quiver, he was himself wounded by a young female, whose features were merely sketched on the canvas, and her figure enveloped in a cloud.

"My dear, dear Frederic!" said Julia, greatly affected.

"My Julia," replied De Montmorency, kneeling at her feet, "what sweet sensations this picture recalls! When I first saw my beloved, she was almost worshipping *St. Sebastian*; close to this resemblance of her now adoring husband, I heard Julia's sweet voice express sentiments I had then the injustice to doubt—but I am forgiven now, my love. Am I not?"

"Oh, yes, dear Frederic; but never, never again wound my heart, by sus-

pecting my veracity, or doubting my affection."

"When the artist has added my Julia's features to this rough sketch," said De Montmorency, throwing his arm round his wife's slender form, "then indeed this picture will be inestimably valuable to me."

"If," replied the countess, smiling, "this same cupid should ever again suspect my fidelity, I will erase my features from the canvas; for then he will not have known the heart of his Julia."

The count, after kissing away a tear that trembled in each eye, led Julia to the head of her table.

The good old baron had slept

soundly on a sofa during the preceding dialogue. De Montmorency now awoke him, and after partaking of a slight supper, they all retired to rest.

The next day passed as Julia thought with the rapidity of lightning. Her husband loaded her with the most costly and magnificent presents, which she had scarcely time enough sufficiently to admire, before the hour arrived, when, accompanied by De Montmorency and the baron, the young and lovely bride made her first appearance in the brilliant circle at the Opera.

The moment they reached their box, Julia attracted universal attention. Her dress was simple, but her orna-

ments were chosen with the most exquisite taste. A white satin robe, trimmed with superb lace, shewed to much advantage the natural beauties of her slender figure.

Her hair was confined by a string of costly pearls, over which was carelessly thrown a veil of the finest Mecklin lace. Ear-rings, bracelets, and a necklace of pearls, gave a peculiar brilliancy to her complexion; and, together with her youthful and modest appearance, her eyes, which timidity concealed the animated expression of, and a certain awkwardness which an intercourse with refined society had not yet effaced, rendered her entire person so expressively interesting, that a confused murmur of

admiration was heard throughout the theatre ; and every opera-glass was directed towards the beautiful bride.

De Montmorency, delighted at the flattering homage rendered to the object of his choice, was more than usually animated and gay. The baron and his nephew rallied their lovely companion on her evident embarrassment, caused by the admiration she was conscious of having excited.

To the great relief of this novice in fashionable life, the curtain at length drew up. She hoped that the attention with which she had been honoured would now be directed to the performance ; but she was mistaken, and the glance she ventured towards the pit convinced her she was still an object

of curiosity. The loud observations made by a party of men infinitely distressed her; and their unruly conduct and vulgar remarks at length became so objectionable to the audience, as to draw forth repeated marks of their disapprobation.

Towards the conclusion of the second act, a box opposite to Julia's was thrown open, and among the persons who entered it she recognized Madame de Seligny and Louisa. The extreme splendour of the dress of the latter, and the profusion of diamonds which loaded her head, made it almost impossible to look at her without being dazzled.

"Oh! De Montmorency," said Julia, turning pale, "there is Madame de Seligny."

At that moment her eyes encountered those of her aunt. The countess bowed respectfully, but Madame de Seligny turned away her head disdainfully, and Louisa, after steadfastly looking at her cousin, waved her hand, and totally unmoved, seated herself by her mother.

"I cannot imagine, countess," said the baron, with ill humour, "why you notice those people."

"I thought it my duty, dear sir," replied Julia ; "but I know Madame de Seligny has now very powerful motives for hating me. She will never pardon me," she added, turning with kindness towards her husband. "No, she will never forgive me—my happiness——"

De Montmorency affectionately pressed her hand, and wishing to mortify

Madame de Seligny, affected, during all the evening, exclusively to devote himself to his lovely bride.

Between the acts several officers of the guards, acquainted with De Montmorency, came into the box, to congratulate him on his marriage, entreating to be introduced to his young and beautiful countess, and included in her parties.

De Montmorency received them with politeness, and Julia, insensibly losing her timidity, soon conversed with the innocent cheerfulness natural to her character.

"Indeed, my friend," said one of the young officers in a low tone to De Montmorency, "indeed you have shewn your judgment and taste in preferring

this divine creature to the Duchess de Beauclerc."

" Of whom do you speak ? " said the count : " surely you are in jest ! Was there ever an idea of my marrying the old Duchess de Beauclerc ? "

" Why, my dear fellow, are you just dropt from the clouds ? " replied the young man, with bursts of laughter : " don't you know that ten days ago Miss de Seligny married the Duke de Beauclerc, son to the old dowager you speak of ? "

" Faith," replied De Montmorency carelessly ; " there is nothing extraordinary in my ignorance of this event, for I am just returned from my estate in Berne ; and I had so completely forgotten both Madame de Seligny and

her automaton of a daughter, that, had not the blaze of jewels with which the new duchess's awkward person is loaded attracted my notice, I should not have recollected such beings had ever existed."

De Montmorency, as he pronounced the last words, gave Madame de Seligny (who was attentively observing him) a look equally scornful as the one with which she had returned Julia's graceful courtesy. The lady bit her lips, and the mortification and anger she felt would no doubt have appeared in her countenance, had not the paint with which her face was enamelled prevented the display of the bad passions which agitated her soul.

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the ba-

ron. “Can that woman have sacrificed her only child to a man so immoral and unprincipled as the Duke de Beauclerc?—whose shattered constitution, disgusting exterior, corrupted heart, and deranged circumstances, are his least failings.”

“Your reflection is a very just one,” replied the young officer; “but you forget, sir, that all the failings and disagreeables you speak of are compensated for by the ducal coronet: and ‘tis that divine little ornament which has fascinated Madame de Seligny, who has made the most serious sacrifices, it is said, to obtain for her noble son-in-law an establishment equal in splendour to any in this metropolis.”

At this moment a deformed, cada-

verous looking little man, hobbled into Madame de Seligny's box. It was the Duke de Beauclerc, who, after bowing to his mother-in-law, who seemed delighted at his presence, seated himself carelessly near Louisa, yawned, took out his opera-glass, looked round the circle, and observing Julia, stared at her with marked attention.

"It must at any rate be allowed," said the baron, laughing heartily, "that they are a very well matched couple."

"The scandalous chronicle has published some rather ludicrous stories with regard to that marriage," said one of the young men in the box; "but this is neither a proper time or place to repeat them."

The baron's curiosity being roused, he proposed to the last speaker a turn or two in the lobby, and they went out together.

The third act was nearly concluded when the baron returned ; and during the remainder of the performance he several times exclaimed, looking with compassion at the young Duchess de Beauclerc : “ Poor Louisa ! ”

When the opera was over, and Julia was giving the baron her hand to lead her from the box, she observed Rosinval at a little distance, examining her with a mischievous sort of curiosity, mingled with irony. The recollection of all she had suffered recurred to her mind, and she with difficulty subdued her indignation towards the

man from whom she had experienced such aggravated injuries; but the fear that De Montmorency might remark her agitation, she had carefully concealed from him Rosinval's last act of treachery, impelled her to bury in her own bosom her various unpleasant sensations.

Rosinval seemed to enjoy the embarrassment he readily guessed the cause of, and when the baron and his niece passed near him, he had the effrontery to congratulate the countess on her marriage, and to renew the protestations of his former friendship.

Julia frigidly replied to this perfidious offer, but De Montmorency, who thought he had been unjust in accusing Rosinval, took the hand of his late

rival, and kindly inquired after his health.

The crowd that obstructed the avenues to the boxes separated De Montmorency from Julia, who still leaned on the baron's arm. They had reached the bottom of the great staircase, and were waiting for the count to join them, when Julia a second time observed Rosinval in the midst of a group of young men, who appeared attentively listening to him, and in a few moments afterwards every eye was directed towards her, and she distinctly heard loud peals of laughter from Rosinval's party.

Disconcerted beyond all expression, she entreated the baron to move on-

wards; and complaining of the excessive heat, she dragged him away from a scene so truly distressing.

To her great relief, she found her husband waiting for her at the entrance of the hall, and instantly jumped into her carriage, rejoiced at having escaped from the insolent scrutiny of the treacherous Rosinval and his associates.

The unpleasant sensations revived by the sight of her worst enemy were soon obliterated from her mind, and there only remained the recollection, so flattering to her self-love, of the homage paid to her beauty, by all the circle of fashion, on her first entering the theatre. Julia had as few weak-

nesses as the generality of her sex, but the admiration she excited gratified her vanity, for Julia was a woman.

The baron's praise, and De Montmorency's satisfied and affectionate manners, also added to her happiness; and it was with youthful enthusiasm, or rather a species of mental intoxication, that she made her first entrance into elegant society.

A slight indisposition confined Julia to the house for a few days, during which period a number of young fashionables, acquainted with her husband, and charmed with his wife's beauty, left their cards, and on her recovery were invited to her table.

De Montmorency wished the countess to be presented before she receiv-

ed or paid the visits customary on similar occasions ; and it was determined that the Marchioness de Boufflers, a near relation of the late Countess de Montmorency, should introduce Julia at Versailles. By a strange coincidence of events, the old Duchess de Beauclerc chose on the same day to present her daughter-in-law ; and the cousins met in the presence of their monarch. How little did the neglected and dependent orphan imagine, the year before this happy period, that she was fated to rival the magnificent and wealthy heiress.

The king remarked Julia's beauty, and the splendid jewels worn by the duchess. In the evening the cousins were spoken of in the little drawing-

room : they were praised, criticised, and the next day forgotten.

In the midst of that vortex, that extravagant waste of time, which at Paris, and in most large cities, it has been agreed to call pleasure, Julia had scarcely a moment for reflection ; and although she perceived all mankind eager to devote themselves to her pleasure, yet she could not but see that the manners of her own sex towards her were stiff, reserved, and distant. This greatly surprised her : she spoke of it to De Montmorency, asking him if he had made the same remark.

“ Dearest Julia,” he replied, pressing her to his heart, “ how can you imagine that when I accompany you into society, any other object than

yourself can attract my attention ! If I even for an instant look at the women you refer to, it is to compare them with my adored friend—my sweet companion ; and then with what exquisite sensations I look at my own happiness ! and bless the hour that made you mine for ever. But," he added, smiling, and drawing Julia towards a glass, "look at these eyes, this mouth, and complexion ! observe this lovely hair, and the expression of this countenance, and you will not again ask me the cause of the coldness and dislike of all your own sex."

Julia, affected by the enthusiasm that evidently proved the strength of her husband's affection, forgot every thing but the delight of being so

dearly loved by the man she would again have chosen in preference to any one of those with whom she was now acquainted: but when she was alone, a crowd of observations and recollections recurred to her imagination; and the unpleasant and mortifying sensations she had before experienced were again revived.

Julia had not a sufficiently exalted opinion of her own merits to suppose, as her husband did, that envy was the secret cause of that coldness and reserved manners which she had constantly observed in the females of her acquaintance. She, however, resolved to encrease her good humour, and solicitude to please, and if possible disco-

ver to what error on her part such strange conduct could be attributed.

A few days after this conversation with the count, Julia sent cards of invitation indiscriminately to every family and individual of fashion, whom she had seen either at her own home, or at the different houses where the Marchioness de Boufflers had introduced her; but to her inexpressible astonishment, all the young women, under different pretences, excused themselves from attending her party, those only of a more advanced age partaking the countess's splendid entertainment, and all those unattended by their daughters, for whose absence they each made some slight apology.

Julia assumed a cheerfulness very foreign indeed from her real sensations, and performed the honours of her house with an elegance and ease that delighted her visitors. But from the moment when she felt the necessity of feigning happiness, and her heart had received the first wound from injustice, her dreams of felicity were at an end, and she saw the pleasures of the great and fashionable world in a less insatuating point of view.

This dinner, which for several days had occupied her attention, and at which she had hoped to assemble all those persons whom she imagined were unfavourably prepossessed against her, and at which she intended either to destroy their prejudices, or at any

rate ascertain the motive of the conduct,

This dinner, as well as the evening that followed it, appeared to Julia unbearably long and tiresome, and she felt as if relieved from an irksome burthen, when her guests took their leave, and she was once again alone with De Montmorency and the baron. She communicated to them her ideas, but they only ridiculed her, and by their good-humoured raillery soon succeeded in persuading her that she attached too much importance to a circumstance wholly unworthy of her attention.

Another month elapsed, during which she had become convinced that her society was avoided by her own sex;

Mortified and irritated at the little success that attended all her efforts to gain the confidence and friendship of her female acquaintance, Julia in her turn affected a coldness and reserve of manner towards the young women she met in society, and even carefully avoided placing herself near them. This conduct unfortunately aggravated the evil, and substantiated the ideas floating in the fashionable world to her prejudice.

At a splendid party given by the Marchioness de Boufflers, in honour of her cousin Frederic de Montmorency's marriage, the pleasures of faro were occupying the attention of the greatest part of those present, and the rest of the company had formed

themselves into groups, and were conversing in a low tone at different parts of the room, when the young Countess de Viverais was announced. Julia turned her head, and instantly recognized one of her old convent companions. The fear of an unpleasant reception prevented her from following the impulse of her heart, which, but for that apprehension, would have propelled Julia to address her favourite with affectionate friendship, and she remained in her place. Not so the young countess, who, after attentively examining Julia with a sensation of astonishment, mingled with joy, hurried across the room, kindly embraced her friend, and seated herself in the chair nearest to her. She then con-

gratulated Julia on her marriage; told her she had been a month united to the Count de Viverais, praised her husband, and particularised the advantages she should derive from her connexion with so ancient and wealthy a family. She inquired of Julia when she had last seen the Duchess de Beauclerc, and without waiting for one answer to her many questions and observations, continued:—

“ But, my dear, did you ever see so divine a dress as that worn by Louisa when she returned her wedding visits? Do you know, although it is so delicately fine, that it could easily be enclosed in a snuff box, it is said; but I can scarcely believe it; that it is entirely made of camel’s hair, and then the

diamonds with which it is trimmed. No, I never in my life saw any thing so superlatively lovely. Don't you think," she continued, "that Louisa is as stupid as ever? but she is very fortunate, I think, in having a mother who makes her such beautiful and costly presents. It is true, to be sure, that her husband is hideously ugly; but then, you know, it is also true, that he has given her a ducal coronet, and that deserves some consideration. I suppose you know the king has named him as ambassador to the court of Naples, and that he goes in a month, accompanied by his silly wife and her mother. Oh, how I do envy them! what a delightful country Italy is! the sky you know is always serene there,

and one hears such divine music. Are you not distractedly fond of Italian music? By the bye, do you visit your estates this autumn? As for me, go I must, with my mother-in-law, to the old family seat of my husband's ancestors : I am wretched about it, for I detest the country, and besides you must know, in confidence, that the old lady is most unbearable, tiresome, and annoying, which you will readily imagine when I tell you she is a bustling, gossipping, meddling, ill-humoured, disagreeable woman ; and, added to all the rest, she is quite a saint ; that is, she alternately backbites, prays, gambles, and prays again."

Julia, astonished at Madame de Viverais's volubility, who had literally

not allowed her time or opportunity to squeeze one syllable into the conversation, entreated the countess to lower her voice, whilst she was thus enumerating her mother-in-law's bad properties, as several persons near them seemed to be listening to her: but she had scarcely resumed the conversation in a less audible tone, when the object of her criticism entered the room, and after the usual compliments, seated herself at the faro table.

The young countess was still whispering her mischievous observations in Julia's ear, when an expressive sign being made by her mother-in-law, she instantly hastened to her, and in obedience to her orders, placed herself in a chair the old lady pointed out to her.

Julia remained nearly a quarter of an hour longer at Madame de Bouffler's, and before she left the room, she went to take leave of her friend, when to her inexpressible surprise, the young countess, after making the most formal, distant, stiff courtesy, turned away her head, without answering one word to the affectionate expressions addressed to her by the greatly astonished Julia.

Nearly overcome by anger and grief, Julia left the room, threw herself into her carriage, and gave a free course to her tears. She was alone, and yielded to all the misery of her reflections. De Montmorency and the baron were at Versailles, and their return not expected until the next day.

On reaching home, she instantly retired to her room, and passed the greatest part of the night in tears, vainly exhausting every possible conjecture and supposition with regard to the ~~change~~^{strange} and inexplicable conduct of every young female she met in society.

Towards the morning, when fatigue and vexation had weighed down her eye-lids, and she was enjoying a peaceable slumber, one of her women entered the room, and presented a letter, saying a servant out of livery waited for an answer.

Excessively alarmed, fearing some accident had occurred to De Montmorency, Julia with a trembling hand broke the seal of the letter, but when

she saw the signature, her agitation subsided, and she read the following words:—

“I cannot, my dear Julia, refrain from justifying myself to you, for certainly my conduct last night must have appeared very extraordinary. Do not, I entreat you, attribute it to any caprice of mine, for I could not disobey my mother-in-law, who forbade my speaking to you, without exposing myself to a dreadful scene on my return home. Indeed, my dear Julia, some reports are circulated relative to you, very, very afflicting to your friends, and as I include myself among them, I will not allow you to remain in ignorance of the malicious stories propagated to your dishonour, and therefore

I have made up my mind to see you, although I dare not call at your house, and still less dare I invite you to mine. I have, however, arranged a plan, which, without committing me, will accomplish my wishes: if you will go at eleven o'clock this morning to our old convent, and chat with Mother St. Delphine, I will tell my mother-in-law, ^{that I am going} to pay a visit to the good old nun, who was so kind to me; she will think this perfectly proper. We can meet there, as if by chance, and of course we shall both be invited into the interior of the convent, and when there we shall have ample opportunity of conversing together without restraint.

"Farewel, and God bless you, my

dear Julia ; I will meet you as soon as I possibly can after eleven, until when, and always, believe me your very sincere friend,

Alphonsine de Viverais."

"I certainly will go," exclaimed Julia with quickness, and immediately answered the young countess's note, by saying she would punctually attend her appointment.

Her extreme impatience made her anticipate the appointed period. She thought all the clocks were too slow, ordered her horses, and at ten o'clock drove to the convent, where she had passed so many years, nearly unable to bear the violent fluttering at her heart.

Julia's remaining patience was, however, put to the test ; for an hour and a quarter she endured the most tiresome *tête-à-tête* with Mother St. Delphine ; heard her long stories, answered her insignificant questions, and good humouredly satisfied the old lady's troublesome curiosity.

Each moment her looks were directed to the door, and she attentively listened to the slightest noise in the court-yard. She heard the twelve o'clock bell ; and unable any longer to command her agitation, she was entreating the good St. Delphine to send one of the gardeners to the countess, when she heard a carriage approach, and in a few moments Madame de Viverais entered the parlour, not

alone as Julia had expected, but accompanied by the Chevalier de Courcy.

"I know I have made you wait," she said, taking Julia's hand. "but you must not be angry with me, for it is all my cousin De Courcy's fault. Figure to yourself, my seeing him paddling through the dirty streets, when I believed him to be in Poitou. The moment I obtained a glimpse of my gentleman, I ordered one of my servants to fly, and tell him I wished to speak to him; but, lo! he had disappeared in the crowd, and I really was beginning to fancy I had seen his spectre; when the footman, who makes it a principle to follow my orders to the very letter, after following the Che-

valier half the town over, and making me sit in the middle of the street for a mortally tedious half hour, brought him to me. But for mercy's sake," she continued, addressing Mother St. Delphine, "do not say a word of all this to my mother-in-law, for if she was to know my cousin came with me here, I should be sermonized for the next fortnight."

"Never fear, my dear child," replied the old nun, "you know my discretion; I never meddle in these little family arrangements; and I would not be the cause of a tiff between the old countess and my pretty Alphonsine, no not for——No, no, I wont even ask you what you had to say to your cousin; thank the virgin, I am not

curious—so you may just tell me what you think it proper I should know. I tell the old lady, indeed ! I am mum, you may be sure, my child, that I——”

Madame de Viverais, interrupted her to declare that she would tell her every particular of her conversation with the chevalier. The eyes of the good nun sparkled with delight at this promise ; she bestowed the most flattering praises on the young countess's prudence and sweet temper, and ended her encomiums by saying :— “ I was quite sure, my dear Alphonsine would tell me all her secrets, for she knows how indulgent I am, and how dearly I love her.”

During this dialogue, the Chevalier de Courcy had expressed to Julia his happiness at again seeing her, and was

inquiring with much kindness about De Montmorency.

" You know my cousin, then," said Madame de Viverais, " well, so much the better ; he will assist me to destroy the calumnies that are uttered about you, my dear Julia : as to me, I do not believe one single word of the abominable story, that is travelling at such a furious rate about the world."

" Holy Mother of God !" ejaculated St. Delphine, drawing her chair closer to the grate ; " what are you saying, my dear girl, tell me all about it ; you know very well it is the same as if you was speaking in a confessional——"

Julia, pale, and trembling in every limb, added in a faint voice :—

" Alphonsine, I entreat you not to

let me suffer thus—in pity tell me what the calumnies are you are speaking of."

" Well then, my dear friends," said Madame de Viverais, " I certainly will gratify your curiosity, besides it is really much better, Julia, for us to converse here than in the convent, for this is the hour of recreation, and we should be assailed by a crowd of our old companions; and then that great overgrown Miss Barency, who pretends to love me so violently, would come with her languishing airs, to talk to me of her sufferings and fine feelings."

" Well, that is excellent," said Mother St. Delphine, interrupting the countess, " what, then you have not heard what has happened? Oh, I must

tell you the whole story ; you must know she fell in love with the geography master, and really wanted to marry him ; but the lady abbess——”

“ In mercy, dear madam,” exclaimed Julia, her patience now entirely exhausted ; “ allow us to hear your story, after Madame de Viverais has explained the nature of the charges now in circulation against me.”

“ Oh, certainly,” replied the babbling countess, “ I will make it very short, for I hate to talk much, or to tell long stories : but I cannot for the soul of me help laughing at the ridiculous idea of her wanting to marry a geography master. Tell me only one thing, dear mother : was it M. Capricorne, that tall, raw boned, ugly man,

who always had his ruffles so nicely plaited, and wore a glossy black coat?"

"The very same," replied Madame St. Delphine, laughing immoderately.

Julia, no longer able to endure her sensations, arose with indignation, and moved towards the door.

"My lovely cousin," said the Chevalier de Courcy, "forgets that the Countess de Montmorency impatiently awaits the explanation so very interesting to herself and friends."

Julia, after giving the chevalier a look of gratitude, again seated herself, although extremely pained at her friend's levity, on a subject so distressing to her feelings.

Madame de Viverais affectedly recommended to her cousin a little more

patience, and turning towards Julia, said :—

“ Is it true, my dear friend, that a marriage between yourself and a counsellor of parliament, named Rosinval, was ever in agitation.”

“ Yes,” replied Julia, turning pale.

“ Is it also true—But no, I cannot believe it, that after employing all the tricks of the most refined coquetry, after having solemnly promised to meet him at the altar, you left your intended husband, and the protection of your friends, only a few days previous to the evening fixed on for the signature of the marriage settlements.”

Julia raised her eyes towards heaven, and in a tone of misery, said :—

"Great God! is it possible!"

"Yes, indeed it is," replied the countess, "and what I have yet to say is still worse, still more."

Julia, unable to articulate one word, looked at Madame de Viverais, as if to implore her to continue her recital.

"Well, my dear," resumed the countess, "they pretend....they assert....but I again repeat, I don't believe one word of it....it is said, that quite alone, and unknown to all your relations, you set off to Berne, and had so well concerted your plan with the young Count de Montmorency, that he immediately followed you, though not before he had broken off his marriage with Miss de Seligny; that, in short, he lived publicly with

you at Font Romeu, totally regardless of the alarming state of health into which his misconduct had thrown his mother, who a few months afterwards died of a broken heart; that, then overpowered by your artifices, he married you, although you had not one guinea in the world, except what you derived from Madame de Seligny's benevolence."

Julia, nearly annihilated by what she had heard, became pale as death. The worthy old nun, fearing she would faint, handed a smelling-bottle through the grate to the Chevalier de Courcy, entreating him to support the innocent victim to this tissue of calumnies.

"Go on," said Julia, in a voice scarcely distinct, after gracefully

thanking M. de Courcy ; “ and in pity tell me who the person, or rather the demon is, whose hatred to me could have induced them to fabricate such an history.”

“ That is what I am quite ignorant of,” replied the countess : “ all I know is, that the first time you appeared at the opera, some person well acquainted, as they said, with all these circumstances, dispersed through the pit what I have been telling you ; and the next day this anecdote relative to the beautiful Countess de Montmorency was circulated in all societies.”

Julia thought of Rosinvâl, and shuddered.

“ As to me,” continued Madame de Viverais, “ I had not heard a syllable

of the matter when I met you at the Marchioness de Boufflers; but my mother-in-law, after enjoining me never to speak to you again, unless I wished to have my reputation destroyed, promised to explain her motive for requiring my implicit obedience to her orders. On our return home she related all I have now told you; I expressed my surprise and confidence in your candour, integrity, and innocence, and I enumerated all the amiable qualities which adorned your character whilst in the convent of St. Antoine; but she still persisted in declaring that all she had said was fact—assured me I had been the dupe to your hypocrisy, and that under the most captivating exterior you concealed a heart replete

with falsehood and art; that you had repaid Madame de Seligny's kindness with the blackest ingratitude, and had even been so depraved as to advise and encourage your cousin to rebel against and disobey her parent."

"This is too much!" exclaimed Julia with indignation. Then, with that accent of truth, that energy of look and expression, the result of conscious rectitude, she related Madame de Seligny's cruelty and unfeeling conduct towards her, even from her earliest infancy—the treachery of Rosinval in withdrawing her from the Castle of St. Louis, and placing her under the care of Madame Dumont—in tears told them the history of Isabella's birth, and unfortunate fate; and explained

the melancholy cause of De Montmorency's appearance at Font Romeu, and his surprise at discovering her a prisoner in his own house, and concluded by declaring that the respectable Baron de Montmorency, her husband's uncle, had witnessed the greater part of these facts; and that the venerable curate of Font Romeu, who had united her to the count, would also render homage to the truth, and prove her veracity and innocence.

The energy, nay vehemence with which Julia had just expressed herself —her excessive paleness—the tears that veiled the brilliancy of her lovely eyes —a certain indescribable something in her manner, which was both artless and sublime, instantly carried convic-

tion to the souls of all those who listened to her. Several expressions of surprise and horror escaped from Madame de Viverais. The Chevalier de Courcy examined Julia with a degree of interest and feeling he could scarcely account for—wished himself her brother, or a friend entitled to vindicate her honour; whilst the good St. Delphine ejaculated, “Good Lord, my God! what a wicked world we live in! Oh how sinful——”

“But let us think of a remedy for all this,” said the countess, interrupting her: “as for me, I most solemnly swear I will this very evening loudly publish what I have just heard; and, my dear,” she added, turning to Julia, “don’t you think it will be right to

communicate to your husband all the dreadful things I have just mentioned to you, that he may be enabled to unmask your worthless accusers?"

Julia reflected for one moment. The threat Montmorency had uttered against Rosinval recurred to her mind, and she shuddered with apprehension.

She knew her husband to be constitutionally irascible. How then could she determine to rouse the rage and resentment which she was sure the depraved conduct of his unprincipled rival would create? and what fatal consequences might ensue from such an explanation! Unable to endure this last idea, Julia melted into tears.

Pressed by her friends to tell the cause of her encreased affliction, she,

still weeping, explained to them the difficulty of her position.

"As I hope for heaven," exclaimed the countess, "that is the strangest idea I ever heard. How in the name of fortune will it affect you, if De Montmorency should require satisfaction for Rosinval's abominable wickedness : it would make a prodigious noise in the world, and you would be amply revenged. As to myself, if I was in your situation, I should consider it very unkind if my husband did not try to retrieve my reputation by challenging my accuser."

"We think very differently then, madam," said Julia, sternly ; "my husband's life is a thousand times more valuable to me than my reputation,

and I would much rather be the victim to the blackest calumnies than expose to danger that life on which depends my own existence."

"Well! was there ever any thing half so absurd? Why, my dear, you talk like a heroine of romance, who always anticipates catastrophes and murders in the most common-place events. But, to be sure, you can do just as you please: I shall not be the less disposed to render you every service in my power."

Julia gratefully thanked the young countess for the interest she so kindly took in her justification, and accepted the offer she had made of defending her in all companies. It was then agreed that the Chevalier de Courcy

should be the medium through which Julia was to learn the success of their first attempt to vindicate her conduct, and consequently remove the odium she so cruelly and undeservedly laboured under.

Julia now took leave of Madame de Viverais, and the good St. Delphine. The latter affectionately said to her, "As for me, my dear child, I am sure I cannot be of any use whatever to you in the world; but I promise you, that for nine days following, and I shall begin this very evening, I will pray to the Holy Ghost to open the eyes and enlighten the understanding of all those whose ears have been open to the vile scandal so wickedly propagated to your disadvantage."

When Julia reached her home, she locked herself in her room, in order the better to reflect on the painful intelligence her friend had communicated, and decide on the conduct most prudent for her to adopt.

She felt that conscious innocence is not always a sufficient protection against unjust prejudices, or an armour strong enough to repel the strokes directed by the malice and revenge of a concealed enemy. She had not courage enough to endure the scrutinizing looks of those who had believed her guilty of the depraved conduct attributed to her, and she resolved to entreat De Montmorency to take her into the country for a few months; during which interval she flattered herself the Che-

valier de Courcy and Madame de Vi-
verais might succeed in destroying,
or at any rate weakening, the dreadful
prepossessions against her, and then
she could return to Paris, and be re-
ceived in society with the respect and
consideration due to her rank and vir-
tues ; besides, this plan would also
securely prevent any explanation oc-
curring between her husband and Ro-
sinval, the mere idea of which chilled
her with terror.

Sad and pensive, Julia threw her-
self on the sofa, and covering her face
with her handkerchief, gave herself up
to all the bitterness of her reflections.

A most extraordinary chain of cir-
cumstances had again plunged her into
the same difficulties, which after her

marriage she never expected to feel the horrors of. She had not one friend in the whole world of whom she could solicit advice, or from whom she could receive consolation. The Baron de Montmorency, who regarded her with really a paternal affection, was the man of all others to whom in her present predicament she most dreaded to confide her sorrows. She knew the goodness of his heart, but she also knew that nothing could suppress the explosion of his rage and indignation, whenever he became acquainted with the calumnies by which her character had been traduced, and she was certain he would not conceal the circumstances from his nephew, but on the contrary induce him to take ample re-

venge of the author, and even propagators of such infamous accusations. All these considerations confirmed Julia in her resolution of requesting De Montmorency to accompany her to the Chateau of St. Louis, and she awaited his return home with the greatest impatience. She was walking backwards and forwards in the room, unable to allay her agitation, when she heard a carriage drive into the court-yard, and a few moments afterwards she saw De Montmorency enter the hall. She immediately hastened to meet him; but he had scarcely looked at her, when struck with her extreme paleness, and appearance of languor and dejection, he exclaimed, "What is the matter, Julia? What has affected you, my

love? Why this sadness, and the traces of tears I observe in your eyes? Speak —tell me....say, has any one dared to give you offence? Ah! if I thought so, I——”

“ No, Frederic! No!” said Julia, terrified: “ I have no complaints to make of any person; but,” she added, (concealing her blushing face on her husband’s shoulder) “ my health—my situation——”

The last words filled De Montmorency with delight; they realised the hopes he had cherished that his beloved Julia carried in her bosom a little being who would cement still closer their affections, and add new delights to their existing happiness. He pressed her to his heart with rapture, led her

to a sofa, and kneeling at her feet, covered her hands with kisses and tears.

The baron, who came into the room at this instant, stood still to enjoy this interesting spectacle.

“ My children !” said he greatly affected, “ my dear, dear, children !” and he folded both of them to his heart.

Julia took advantage of the moment, when the two beings she so loved and respected, were loading her with marks of their affection ; and again mentioned her wish to leave the metropolis.

“ Dearest Frederic,” she said, “ I think I shall be better in the country, than in this tumult of noise and dissipation : I want rest, it is essential to my health ; would it be requiring too great

a sacrifice, if I entreated you to take me to St. Louis for a few months? I long once more to admire the sublime beauties of nature, and here you know——”

“A sacrifice!” said De Montmorency, interrupting her, “how can you use such an expression. Oh! my Julia! command me, dispose of me as you like; are you not my sovereign, the object of my exclusive adoration? Have I any wish but to make you happy? But, dearest love,” he added after a moments reflection, “may not a journey into Touraine, be too fatiguing in your present situation? Shall I take a house in the vicinity of Paris?”

“No,” replied Julia, who feared a too great proximity to Paris might

not answer her purpose: “I prefer going to St. Louis; the air is excellent, and I shall be so well and happy there.”

The count still urged his fears of her health, and proposed to engage a villa in the Bois de Boulogne, or the Vallée de Montmorency; but the baron perceiving that their over attention annoyed Julia, said smiling:—

“Come, my boy, yield at once to my niece’s wish: you know that a woman about to become a mother must never be contradicted: think of the pretty cherub she will soon present to us, and give orders for your journey immediately: some material business will detain me here a few days

after you, but I shall very soon join you at St. Louis, my dear children."

"Let us set off to-morrow, to-night even, if Julia wishes it," said De Montmorency.

"As you have the goodness to consent to my request," said Julia, with a look of gratitude to her husband; "allow me to name the day after to-morrow for our departure."

She then retired to give the necessary orders. The certainty of leaving for a time the place wherein she had experienced both mortification and insult, almost restored Julia's natural cheerfulness; her mind and heart were satisfied and calm, for her apprehensions, lest her husband should be involved

in a quarrel with Rosinval, were now extinct.

On the evening of the day preceding that on which they were to commence their journey, when Frederic and his Julia were anticipating the pleasures they should experience in the retirement of St. Louis, a servant announced the Chevalier de Courcy. His presence recalled all Julia's fears and unpleasant sensations ; she fancied he looked unusually grave, and concluded that all Madame de Viverais's efforts to vindicate her reputation had been unsuccessful. She became pale as death at the idea, and was scarcely able to utter the usual civilities due from a lady to her husband's friend ; whilst the count really, gratified by the

chevalier's visit, gave him a most affectionate reception.

" You will not remain long in Paris, this time, Albert," said De Montmorency to his friend, " for we set out for Tourain to-morrow, and I give you notice that I mean to take you with us to St. Louis."

The chevalier assuring De Montmorency and the countess that he would gratefully accept the invitation, adding that business of some importance required his presence in Paris a few days longer, and would prevent his having the happiness of accompanying them; but he promised to follow the moment he could bring the affair, in the success of which he was deeply interested, to a happy con-

clusion. "It is now in a very satisfactory train," he said, giving Julia an expressive look, "and I hope very shortly to surmount the few remaining difficulties."

"Is it a law-suit?" said the baron, who had just entered the room.

"No," replied the Chevalier de Courcy.

"I guess then," resumed the baron, "that it is either family business, a love affair, or scandal."

De Courcy still remained silent.

Julia, whose uneasiness became extreme, endeavoured to give a different turn to the conversation; but by an unaccountable chance, slander became the subject. De Montmorency related the calumnies that had been resorted

to in order to blemish his wife's reputation before their marriage, and the baron honoured Madame de Seligny with a volley of abuse.

"She may thank heaven she is a woman," said he, "for, by the holy angels, I have only one way of punishment a slanderer, and that is by cutting off his ears."

Julia again turned pale, and was nearly fainting: fortunately several visitors were announced at the moment, and she overcame her confusion before De Montmorency had remarked it.

During the remainder of the evening, she made several attempts to address a few words to the Chevalier de Courcy, without being heard by her husband: at last, when they were ar-

ranging the card tables, and the men were walking up and down the room ; a place became vacant near Julia's chair, which she made a sign to the chevalier to occupy.

"Has Madame de Viverais, sir," she said in a low voice, not daring to look at him, "been so friendly as to share in your generous efforts? May I indulge some hope of being rightly appreciated in society?"

"Yes, madam," replied the chevalier, "Madame de Viverais pleaded your cause last evening at the Maréchal de Chateau Brillants, with the zeal and energy of a real friend : there was a large party. At first she was heard with more surprise than feeling ; but when she had developed all the

particulars of your history, as you related them to us, sentiments of indignation and disgust at such unprincipled depravity were uttered from all parts of the room ; and the fabricator of the reports to your dishonour was so overwhelmed with approbrious epithets, that the man must be courageous indeed, who now ventures to make an observation to your disadvantage. At the moment when Madame de Viverais had excited every sensation in her hearers of shame and regret for their conduct towards you, madam, I entered the room, and fortunately supported the countess, by positively asserting that I heard all the circumstances related in the exact same manner by the Baron de Montmorency."

"Ah! what do I not owe to Madame de Viverais, dear Alphonsine! and how greatly I am obliged to you, sir," said Julia, looking at the chevalier, with an expression that added a thousand charms to her lovely face.

De Courcy, from an instinct he had no power to control, took hold of Julia's hand, but feeling the impropriety of the act, he gently let it drop on her knee, and in a trembling voice said:—

"To be the defender of innocence, of calumniated virtue, is the sacred duty of every honourable man: worthless indeed must he be, who does not eagerly embrace every opportunity of fulfilling it: but when in your service,

madam, this obligation to protect injured excellence, is the most heartfelt, the most pure of all human gratifications."

As he pronounced these last words, the chevalier's face became animated, and Julia, who was steadfastly looking at him, felt a sensation, which had you given her a kingdom, she could not have denominated: it was a mixture of admiration and gratitude.

De Montmorency was standing in one of the angles of the room, his arm resting on Julia's harp, gravely and attentively examining the conduct of his wife and the chevalier; but the moment he perceived that Julia had observed him, he left his place, and min-

gling with the rest of the company, no longer seemed to direct his looks towards her.

The chevalier was preparing to resume the conversation; but the countess, a good deal alarmed at the agitation she thought she had observed on her husband's countenance, hastily arose, and after attempting an incoherent apology to De Courcy, hastily left him to join as she said a whist party then forming.

Extremely surprised, the chevalier knew not to what cause he ought to attribute this abrupt interruption to a conversation, naturally most interesting to the Countess de Montmorency; whilst Julia, greatly afflicted at not

having learnt from him the nature of the obstacles, that still remained to be surmounted, before her reputation could be cleared from the ill-founded aspersion of her enemy, could scarcely conceal her vexation, and she unfortunately committed some faults which drew severe reproaches from her partner. No longer able to endure her irksome situation at the card table, she complained of a head-ache, relinquished her place to another lady, and once again felt anxious to resume her conversation with the chevalier. Her eyes wandered in search of him all over the drawing-room, but he was gone, and she consoled herself with the certainty of seeing him in a few days at

St. Louis, where she should have frequent opportunities of conversing with him alone.

When the company had retired, and Julia was left with the baron and her husband, she observed a depression of spirits in the latter that gave her uneasiness; yet his manner towards her was still affectionate and kind.

They supped alone, as the baron had retired very early to bed; on leaving the table, Julia was going to her room, but De Montmorency taking one of her hands, said in much agitation:—

“ Allow me one moment, Julia; I wish for some explanations. Tell me, I beg of you, the subject of the very interesting but mysterious conversation

you had this evening with Albert de Courcy."

Julia, confused by this unexpected question, blushed and remained silent.

De Montmorency let the hand he held drop, and took some hasty steps backwards and forwards in the room, evidently in great uneasiness.

"My surprise is extreme," at length said Julia, in a tremulous, voice "at the importance you seem to attach to the most simple incident in the world. The chevalier is your friend, and I had no idea that my conversing with him would have appeared to you at all extraordinary."

De Montmorency stopped for a moment, looked steadfastly at his wife,

and again walked up and down the room in much agitation.

"Dearest Frederic," said Julia, affected by the count's evident unhappiness, "dearest Frederic! is it possible that you conceive doubts of your Julia? Can you imagine me guilty of...."

De Montmorency stopped her, by saying:—"God of his infinite mercy forbid! but may I not know what De Courcy said to you?"

"He spoke to me of the Countess de Viverais," said Julia; "she is the chevalier's cousin, and one of my old convent friends. I met her a few evening's since at Madame de Boufflers; we renewed our acquaintance, and I was expressing to the chevalier my happy-

ness at so unexpectedly seeing the companion of my childhood, whose manners are now as artless and unaffected as in the earliest years of our acquaintance."

The count satisfied, although surprised, by this explanation, given with so much simplicity, and in a tone of candid veracity and innocence, entreated his wife to pardon his unjust suspicion, and loaded her with encomiums on the sweetness of her disposition, and the patience with which she had convinced him of his error.

Although Julia had not positively deviated from the truth, yet she had so transposed incidents, and garbled the conversation between her and De Courcy, in the explanation she had

just given, that she felt a little remorse of conscience on receiving her husbands praises: yet the purity of her intention's soon reconciled her to herself, and she became convinced that she could not have acted otherwise without endangering the tranquillity, or perhaps exposing the life of him whom she loved more than all the world.

Early the next morning they left Paris, and in the evening of the second day, they arrived at the Chateau de St. Louis.

On entering the avenue that led to the castle, Julia's mind reverted to the sensation she had experienced, when as part of Madame de Seligny's retinue she had past over the same road. At that time the humble com-

panion of Louisa, having no prospect but dependence and poverty, her utmost ambition extending no farther than to be tolerated in the house of her affluent cousin, now the absolute mistress of this princely residence, the beloved wife of that adored De Montmorency, from whom she had imagined herself separated for ever. How very enviable was her present position ; leaning on her husband's arm, she could now wander through those walks and groves that had so frequently witnessed her affliction and tears. A pure unalloyed happiness would now be her lot ; she should in that blessed retreat enjoy the society of her Frederic ; and the unjust prepossessions of the world would no longer interrupt her peace.

Such were Julia's thoughts, which impelled her to take her husband's hand, raise it to her lips, and say:—"My dear, dear De Montmorency, here I shall be happy, yes, perfectly happy!"

At this moment the sound of rustic music met her ears, and Julia perceived a group of villagers, dressed in their holiday cloaths, enter the avenue. They were the count's tenants, who followed the carriage, repeating with joy and enthusiasm:—"Long live our good lord! may the Almighty bless him, and my lady the countess!"

When Julia got out of the carriage, she was surrounded by a number of young females dressed in white, who carried baskets of flowers, which they

picked to pieces, and strewed on the path before her.

"Dearest love," said the count in a low voice, "the young women you now see date their marriage from the period when I had the happiness to be united to my Julia: I wish that blessed day to be for ever celebrated at St. Louis by those unfortunate lovers, whose union was prevented by the want of fortune; and I wrote from Font Romeu to my steward here, ordering him to give a marriage portion to twelve girls born on my estate, and to unite them all to the objects of their affection on the happy day which gave to this castle its lovely mistress."

Julia, greatly affected, took her hus-

band's hand, and without speaking a word, pressed it to her heart; but De Montmorency, unable to restrain the sensations of delight, caused by his own felicity, and the presence of those beings whom he had rendered completely happy, threw his arms round his lovely companion, and, notwithstanding her blushes, impressed an ardent kiss on the coral lips of his wife.

"Bravo! bravo!" exclaimed the tenantry, "long live my lord and the countess! may heaven heap upon them every happiness and prosperity!"

In the midst of these gratifying acclamations, Julia entered the castle. At the hall door she saw a young woman with a beautiful child, about a year old, in her arms, whose little hands

supported a bunch of orange flowers.
“Condescend, madam, to accept this homage,” said the young female, raising up the child and the nosegay; “it is offered by the godson of our lord.”

Julia took the flowers, caressed the child, and praising its beauty, inquired its name.

“St. Sebastian, at your ladyship’s service,” replied the mother; “my lord gave that name to my boy, because, he said, it was very dear to him. Ah! how sorrowful our dear master was on that day; I remember it was on the feast of St. Michael, a year ago come six days. Folks did say my lady the countess had married that ugly M. de Rosinval, but thank

the holy virgin for all things, that was not true; for it would have been a cruel pity."

Julia again caressed the child; she took it in her arms, then returned it to the mother, after slipping a few guineas amongst its cloaths.

The remainder of the evening was dedicated to rejoicing. The castle and the principal walks of the park were illuminated, and the villagers passed great part of the night in dancing under the tree, where tables were placed for their use, covered with refreshments.

Several days thus passed away, and Julia would have been really happy, had not painful reflections frequently obtruded themselves, and blighted every

enjoyment. She wondered why the Chevalier de Courcy so long protracted his intended visit, and she formed so many unpleasant conjectures as to the cause of his absence, that she had difficulty in concealing her anxiety and depression of spirits from her husband, whose affectionate solicitude for her health and comfort each hour increased. The dreadful necessity of constraining her feelings in the presence of the being whose arms and bosom were her natural protection and shelter against insult and unhappiness, added to her constant affectation of tranquillity, so foreign from her real sensations, soon became so irksome, and gave her so decided a taste for solitude, that she secluded herself entirely from the so-

ciety of the neighbouring families, and remained in her own apartment for hours together, under the pretence of studying the English language, in which she had made great progress during her stay at Paris.

When De Montmorency first remarked her extraordinary passion for retirement, he tried by every endearment to dissuade Julia from such intense application, which he considered injurious to her health ; but perceiving that his gentle remonstrances not only failed in their effect, but were painful to his wife's feelings, he ceased to oppose her wishes, and silently allowed her to pass her time in the way that seemed most congenial to her inclinations.

Frederic and Julia had spent a tedious fortnight at St. Louis, where the latter had so erroneously supposed she was to find unalloyed felicity, when their joyless *tête-à-têtes* were broken in upon by the baron's arrival.

After affectionately receiving the assurances of his nephew and Julia's unaltered regard, he presented the latter with a superb edition of Pope's Works, lately published in England, which he had obtained from London purposely for his niece.

Julia, affected by this mark of the baron's goodness, warmly expressed her gratitude, and hastened to open the packet of books which a servant had just brought into the room.

"By the bye," said the baron, "your

friend De Courcy will very speedily reach the castle. I met him three days ago, and he then told me he intended leaving Paris in a few hours. He was very pale, and had one of his arms in a sling. I asked him with real interest (for I think him an amiable, highly accomplished, and unaffected young man) I asked him if the accident was occasioned by a wound. He told me it was, and immediately changed the conversation.

"I have since learnt that the chevalier fought a duel about the young Countess de Viverais, who is his cousin (and according to the scandalous chronicle something more); but be that as it may, the old lady, her mother-in-law, is so greatly incensed at

the affair, that she has taken her off to the family estate in Poitou."

The books Julia held fell from her hands. She stooped to pick them up, and thus concealed her extreme agitation occasioned by the baron's intelligence. For some moments she was unable to utter one word, and probably her paleness, and the involuntary trembling that agitated all her limbs, would not have escaped De Montmorency's observation, had not the twilight rendered the objects in the room nearly indistinct; and by the time the servants brought in lights, Julia had regained her usual composure.

"I shall be truly happy to see De Courcy," said the count. "My friend Albert is a famous sportsman, and I

can assure you, my dear sir," he added, addressing the baron, " that the wood to the left of the park will this year afford us plenty of occupation—I am told it swarms with game."

" So much the better, my boy," said the baron, rubbing his hands, " that is quite right—I'll answer for it we will keep them in order; but I don't suppose the poor chevalier can be one of us yet a while. How would you have him hunt with that devil of an arm in a sling?"

" Well, well, we will begin without him, and when he is quite recovered he can join us: there will still be plenty of game at his service."

" Certainly, certainly," said the ba-

ron ; “ besides there ought to be somebody to keep my niece company, you know, and ——”

“ As to that,” said De Montmorency, interrupting him, “ your niece has imbibed so strong a taste for solitude, that she remains for days together shut up in her own room, where even my presence seems to annoy her.”

“ Frederic !” said Julia, with an accent of reproach, “ is it possible you can thus judge of me ?”

The baron with surprise looked alternately at the husband and wife. He fancied he discovered in De Montmorency’s countenance a mixture of displeasure and indifference ; but Julia’s extreme dejection forcibly struck him :

he drew his chair close to her's, and affectionately inquired the cause of her unhappiness.

"I hope, my dear sir," said De Montmorency to his uncle, "the countess will favour you with the explanation she refuses to me. I have long perceived that some secret grief preys upon her health and spirits, and I have (not by improper questions, but by an increase of affection and tenderness) invited her to confide her sorrows in the bosom of her natural protector, and most devoted friend; but Julia has not condescended to entrust me: nay, these proofs of my affection have seemed to distress her, and I have for some time ceased my importunities: indeed, she

has for the last week entirely absented herself from my society."

"Unkind Frederic!" again exclaimed Julia, her eyes filling with tears.

"What in the devil's name does all this mean?" said the Baron. "It is quite enough to drive a man raving mad. I expected, old fool as I am, to find you as loving as any two of the turtle-doves in your own woods; instead of which I hear on the one side nothing but reproaches, and on the other I see only misery and tears. Come, my dear girl, come hither," he added, drawing his niece towards the window, whilst De Montmorency remained on his seat sullenly observing them.

After conversing for a few minutes in a low tone with Julia, the baron left her, and taking hold of his nephew's arm, said in rather an angry tone—

"A truce, sir, to all this childish nonsense. By my conscience you very little deserve to possess the charming woman fate has blest you with. She loves you as dearly as when I gave her to you at the altar; she has just told me so. Zounds, sir, she has told me so, and in a manner that reached the bottom of my soul. Julia," he continued, leading De Montmorency towards his wife, "repeat what you said to me—yes, repeat it, for he will not believe me. Well, child! in the de-

vil's name what ails you? Why you are all at once become dumb. Plague take all women, say I."

"He no longer delights in hearing me say I love him," at length Julia answered in a plaintive voice. "Oh, my dear sir, De Montmorency is strangely altered: he seems insensible to the misery caused by his unkind and unjust reproaches. Ungrateful Frederic! he knows how very dear he is to me--that he alone occupies my every thought, and that to please him, and secure his peace of mind and affection, are the only objects of my heart, and yet he doubts me--suspects me of—."

"There, now you hear," said the baron, interrupting Julia, "you alone

occupy all her thoughts. I told you so, sir, I told you so," he added, looking triumphantly at his nephew.

"It is rather singular," said De Montmorency, with a forced smile, "that the countess should leave my society, and shut herself up in her room for days together to think of me."

Julia, unable to endure the severity and bitterness of this reproach, threw herself into a chair, and seemed nearly fainting.

"Leave the room, sir," said the baron, beyond measure exasperated at his nephew's conduct; "instantly withdraw. Do you not see the situation this dear child is reduced to, and all by your shameful suspicious temper?

You will soon perceive the consequences of these follies. She will be ill, I know it—perhaps miscarry, and then you will have killed your wife. Yes, sir," added the worthy baron, dashing away some tear-drops from his eyes, "you will have destroyed your wife and your child."

De Montmorency turned pale. He hastened to his wife, took one of her hands, and finding it cold, all his affection and anxiety for her health instantly returned.

"My Julia!" he said, in a low voice. Julia's head fell on her husband's arm, and she burst into tears.

A profound silence for some minutes succeeded this last expression. At length the count in a grave tone

said : “ What occasions your unhappiness ? Why this wish to be always alone ? Ah, Julia ! either your affections are alienated from me, or you have some secret sorrow which you will not confide to your husband. In either case, am I unjust in requiring an explanation ? Can you blame me for being deeply affected at a circumstance which threatens to affect my honour, and destroy my happiness ? ”

Julia still continued to weep without answering.

“ You see, sir,” said De Montmorency, addressing his uncle ; “ she does not deign to speak a single word.”

“ The very amiable manner,” replied the baron, peevishly, “ with which you received the assurances of

her unaltered regard and desire to please you, must certainly make her extremely anxious to lavish on you more proofs of her affection."

De Montmorency gently disengaged himself from his wife's arms, and walked up and down the room in great agitation.

"For heaven's sake, spare me," said Julia: "in mercy do not render me still more wretched. I love you, Frederic, as ardently as I did at the moment when you withdrew ^{me} from dependent misery, and first took me to your bosom. Your affection is the blessing of my existence: your honour and happiness are my first consideration and care. The habitual melancholy you complain of, I acknowledge invin-

cible: it is probably occasioned by my present situation; and can you be displeased with me for concealing from you a depression of spirits I have in vain tried to conquer, when the fear of afflicting you was my real motive for absenting myself so much from your society?"

"Lovely, dear creature!" said the baron. "By all the angels in heaven, if I was her husband, she would turn my brain, old as I am."

De Montmorency again seated himself near Julia, took one of her hands, and raised it to his lips without speaking a word.

The conversation now took a more pleasant turn; yet Julia observed on her husband's countenance a gloom

and dissatisfaction very unusual to him. This remark increased her unhappiness, which she, however, determined as much as possible to confine to her own heart.

The following day the baron and his nephew took the diversion of hunting : the weather was delightful. Julia spent a great part of the morning in the Chinese temple, where she had ordered her harp and English books to be carried. After finishing her usual task of translation, she threw her shawl over her shoulders, and was preparing to take a walk in the park, when a servant announced the Chevalier de Courcy's arrival at the castle.

Julia was hastening towards the house, when she met the chevalier at

the end of one of the walks. His excessive paleness, his wounded arm, and languid appearance, altogether so much affected the countess, that she reprimanded the servant with an asperity of manner very unusual to her, for allowing him to walk so far; and as the Chinese temple was nearer than the castle, she invited the invalid to rest himself there for a few minutes.

"I much fear, sir," she timidly said, "the ill fortune that ever attends me has extended its baneful influence over the generous beings, whose friendship and zeal on my behalf merit a very different recompense—your wound.... Madame de Viverais's departure."

"As I feared, madam," said the chevalier, "the report of this insig-

nificant affair has reached your ears. But condescend to allow me one question," he added, with that tone of feeling her sorrowful and dejected appearance inspired: " Is De Montmorency aware of those circumstances we agreed it was best he should remain in ignorance of?"

" No," replied Julia.

She then related the vague reports brought to St. Louis by the baron, and entreated the chevalier to oblige her by communicating all those particulars she was so infinitely anxious to be informed about.

" I will," he replied, " begin by the most interesting and material part of the subject. The calumnies and slander with which they had dared to

asperse your character, madam, are for ever extinct."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Julia, with an accent of delight.

"Yes," added the chevalier; "the enemies of virtue and innocence are doomed to everlasting mortification and silence. Madame de Boufflers and the Marachale de S—— warmly seconded our efforts, and the same women, who so tenaciously avoided your society, now consider you the interesting victim to the most base and unprincipled conspiracy formed against your reputation and happiness. They loudly praise you, and intend by their future attention and solicitude to repair the injury they have already done, in causing one sigh of anguish to escape from that

pure and uncontaminated bosom where

— ”

The chevalier suddenly stopped, and cast his eyes on the ground. Probably he felt that the last few words had been uttered with more than friendly energy.

Julia in silence clasped her hands together, and raised her eyes towards heaven with an expression of such gratitude and feeling, that the chevalier thought himself amply rewarded for all he had suffered in consequence of this affair.

“ Ah, sir ! ” at length Julia said, “ how very happy I should now be if I had not to reproach myself with having endangered Madame de Viverais’s peace, and — ”

She dared not conclude the sentence,

but her looks were fixed on De Courcy's wounded arm.

"The thoughtlessness of my giddy cousin, and perhaps too much warmth on my part, were the only causes of this foolish circumstance being so much talked of," replied the chevalier.
"Most fortunately, madam, your name has not been in any way implicated; but here," he added, "is a letter, which Madame de Viverais honoured me with the charge of: it contains a circumstantial account of an incident which I dare say has excited your curiosity."

M. de Courcy then handed a folded paper to Julia, on one of the sides of which was written—"For Julia, when alone"

"I confess," added the chevalier, "that my poor cousin's position is not an enviable one; for her mother-in-law, whose disposition is naturally austere, and her temper very acid, will not omit any opportunity of making her feel contrition for her levity; and, unfortunately, De Viverais will not return these two months from the mission our monarch charged him with to the cabinet of Vienna."

Julia eagerly unfolded the paper, and in a low voice read as follows:

"Pity me, my dear Julia, do pity me. Torn from the very bosom of pleasure, dragged like a criminal a hundred leagues from Paris, and placed in a frightful solitude in the centre of impervious woods, condemned to hear

and see only my merciless mother-in-law, I sink under my wretched destiny. Surely I must have been born under the influence of some malignant planet! What is there so very dreadful in causing a duel? My cousin fought for me, to be sure; but then he gave me a celebrity, which it grieves my very soul not to enjoy the delight of. If I had remained in Paris, I should have been the fashion, the rage, at least for six weeks: every body would have stared at me. How delightful to be talked of, and pointed out at all the public places, walks, &c. &c. Instead of which—ah, Julia! I repeat, feel for and pity me: indeed, you ought to do so, for you are the unintentional cause

of my misery. Had not this adventure occurred, the countess intended to pass a fortnight at her estate in Picardy, and not bury herself, and poor me, in this horrible Poitou. I must, however, try to calm myself sufficiently to write you my history, though I hardly know whether I can accomplish my undertaking, for I do nothing but cry, and my eyes are so swollen by my tears, that I can scarcely see out of them. **But to begin :**

“ On the evening of the day we met at the convent, I went very early to the Marachale de S——’s party. You know she is deaf, a gossip, and most insufferably curious. I was certain your story would make a good impression

in her circle ; I therefore seated myself close to her, and affected to be quite in the dismals.

" This little stratagem succeeded famously. The old lady, after attentively looking at me through her spectacles, asked if I was ill.

" No, ma'am,' I said, in a languid voice, yet sufficiently distinct to be heard by several persons engaged at a card-table near us ; ' I am not ill, but my heart is sorely wounded by the calumnies circulated by some concealed enemy, and which have been nearly fatal to the reputation and happiness of one of my dearest friends.'

" Heaven be merciful !' exclaimed the marachale, drawing her chair still

nearer to mine. ‘ What is it you say, my dear child ? I protest I never heard your reputation in the slightest degree calumniated.’

‘ I am not the subject of the slander, madam,’ I replied, elevating my voice : ‘ the young Countess de Montmorency is the innocent object which malevolence has chosen for its victim.’

‘ Scarcely had I pronounced your name, my dear Julia, when several women, who appeared to be listening to me with feeling and interest, suddenly drew up their necks, and assumed a stiffness of manner quite disgusting.

‘ Others smiled scornfully, and the marachale pushed back her chair, after muttering between her teeth—‘ The

Countess de Montmorency ! She is very captivating, to be sure, the young countess, but——'

"It is a very lamentable reflection," I exclaimed, with indignation; "yet it is most true that the world always receives with avidity and eagerness every recital of slander, whilst mistrust and incredulity are constantly opposed to the justification of injured innocence."

"I uttered this sentence with so much energy, that several persons left their seats, and came towards me; and the old marachale once more moved her arm-chair closer to mine.

"Madam," said a man drest in black, whose bloated face, and red-rimmed eyes, extraordinarily displeased me; "your generous friendship is cer-

tainly very amiable; but against the young lady you have just named, there are some very serious accusations, which she has not attempted to refute.'

"That is because she was in ignorance of them, sir,' I quickly replied; 'but when informed by me of the disgraceful reports circulated to her disadvantage, she favoured me with a full explanation, and also with the names of the worthless beings who were so cowardly as to inflict a wound which could neither be resented, or, as they thought, immediately healed.'

"The ugly man in black shook his head ironically; and bowing, left me.

"I then inquired his name.

"Rosinval!" replied the Marachale de S——; 'but my dear countess,' she

added, ‘ pray have the goodness to tell us how your young friend has been able to justify her conduct previous to her marriage with the Count de Montmorency ? ’

“ Nothing was more easy,’ I answered ; ‘ she simply told me facts.’ And in proof of her veracity quoted the testimony of some persons, whose honour and probity are unimpeachable. I was then beginning a recital of all that you confided to me, when my cousin De Courcy was announced. Encouraged by the presence of the only being who could support the cause I was pleading, I continued with increased zeal to vindicate you, and I may say, without much vanity, that my proselytes increased at every sentence.

"I never heard of any thing so shameful! It is really dreadful!" was echoed from all those around me. "Could one ever have imagined such treachery!" added some women at a little distance, whilst the rest appeared dumb with astonishment at such depravity.

"I now enjoyed my triumph, and received with becoming condescension and humility the praises lavished on my friendship and goodness of heart. But on casting my eyes into the next drawing-room, I perceived Rosinval emphatically, although in a low voice, addressing a group of hearers, his frightful face ^{seeming} beaming still more red and shining: De Courcy was close to him, apparently listening with much

attention to his discourse. In a few minutes I saw the chevalier mingle in the party, which soon dispersed. My cousin afterwards told me the worthless Rosinval had opposed some plausible arguments to my recital, but that very few of his auditors entertained doubts of your innocence.

" My mother-in-law had joined me at the marachale's, and did not disapprove my exertion in your behalf. It was late when we left the party, and I had agreed to meet De Courcy the next day at Madame de Boufflers, and there support your cause with equal warmth and energy.

" On the following evening I reached the marchioness's house about eight o'clock : her circle was numerous, and

more than usually brilliant. I soon discovered that your story had preceded me, but I perceived with a sort of terror (certainly the presentiment of the mischief that afterwards occurred) the odious Rosinval, leaning again the chimney-piece, in conversation with some old women. On seeing me, he laughed loudly, and looked at me so strangely, that his frightful features had an expression truly diabolical.

" Madame de Boufflers overwhelmed me with caresses. She had never heard the absurd reports relative to you. The reason for her remaining in ignorance of them is very obvious. As a relation of your husband, it would have been highly indelicate to mention to her anything to your disadvantage. She there-

fore heard the slander and your justification together, and was much gratified at my having defended you with (as she termed it) such friendly zeal. Several females of her party also came to me, and, following her example, lavished on me the most flattering encomiums.

" At nine o'clock De Courcy arrived. We placed ourselves in a snug corner of one of the supper-rooms, then unoccupied, the better to converse about you without interruption. He told me he had just left you, and that you knew the success of our first attempt. Albert was evidently vexed at the absence of some people he expected to meet, as he was anxious to administer to their minds a strong antidote against the

poison of Rosinval's artful insinuations of the preceding evening.

"Whilst we were conversing together in a low voice, I happened to raise my eyes, and perceived that wretch De Rosinval close to us: he was examining us with so much impertinence, and gave me so fiend-like a look, that, unable to command my indignation, I said to my cousin—

"For heaven's sake, De Courcy, let us avoid that vile calumniator."

"Fear nothing, madam," replied the monster, smiling maliciously: "do you think the *vile calumniator* would be believed, if he gives publicity to your innocent *tête-à-têtes* with the Chevalier de Courcy?"

"What have you to say, sir?" said my cousin, haughtily.

"Nothing whatever to you, sir," coldly replied Rosinval. "I have the honour to address myself to the countess."

"You will however answer me, sir," added the chevalier, with a menacing gesture.

"Rosinval turned pale: De Courcy went up to him uttered some words I could not distinguish, and they together left the room in a disposition that made me shudder with apprehension.

"Stop them! I screamed out, they are going to fight.... 'tis about me.... I am the cause," and I immediately lost all consciousness.

"Ah, Julia! what have I still to tell You? On recovering my senses I found myself on a sofa. Madame de Boufflers

was supporting my head, and making me respire volatile salts. The eyes of every one were fixed on me: I heard loud talking; saw people running in and out of the room; and in the midst of this general confusion, and the discordant murmurs that on every side struck my ears, I distinguished the words....“*Pistols*”....“ duel behind the chateau,” and uttered a piercing shriek. At this moment the apparition of my mother-in-law (who from some officious person she had met in the hall had learnt all that had happened) nearly deprived me once more of my senses. Almost choaked with passion, the countess seized me by the arm, and ordered me to follow her; I obeyed in silence; but I was so pale, and trembled

so excessively, that Madame de Boufflers, feeling compassion for my situation, stopped my mother-in-law, and whispered to her a few words I could not hear.

“ That is all very easy for you to suppose, madam,’ sharply replied the Countess de Viverais. ‘ But I hope from my heart you may never by experience know how very unpleasant it is to have the charge of a married woman of nineteen, in the absence of her husband.’ I reached home in a situation you may imagine not over enviable, and to complete my misery, my merciless mother-in-law *sermonized* me until her exhausted lungs resigned the service. I spent the night in tears, and the next morning, not at all feeling

for the dreadful state of weakness to which I was reduced by the late circumstances, the countess literally pushed me into her travelling carriage, and brought me to this melancholy castle, where I am doomed to remain until De Viverais returns.—Julia, let me once more ask you if I am not an unfortunate creature? but thank heaven, notwithstanding all the precaution of my Argus, I contrived to hear all about my poor cousin.

" Rose, one of my women, in whom I place the most confidence, will in a few months marry De Courcy's valet. She read me a letter from her intended husband, the contents of which a little calmed my anxiety. I know the chevalier has received a pistol shot in his

left arm, and that the wound is not dangerous, as the ball did not reach the bone.—Oh, my god ! what would have become of me, if my cousin——The idea is too frightful.——I shall write to the poor chevalier, requesting him to present you this letter, and my faithful Rose will convey the packet to him.

“ You must not, on any account, send me a letter by the post, therefore give your answer to De Courcy, who will forward it to me. Farewel, Julia. When do you return to Paris? How fortunate you are ; you can do as you like. Do not forget your friend, when you are in the midst of pleasure. Tell me all the news from the emporium of delight ; indeed it will be charity, for it is impossible that you

can form to yourself an idea of the mortal lassitude by which I am consumed at this dreary old mansion. I wish it was haunted, or any thing that would change the wearisome monotony of our occupations.

Again farewell, Julia :

accept the blessing of

ALPHONSINE de VIVERAIS."

After reading this letter, Julia remained for a few moments silent; at length, looking at De Courcy, she said :—

" I shall never forgive myself, sir, for being the cause of the mortification Madame de Viverais is subjected to, for the thoughtless conduct you attribute to her would not have occurred, but

for your unfortuuate conversation with her in one of the supper-rooms."

"I declare to you, madam," replied the chevalier smiling, "that you are absolutely unacquainted with the subject of discussion between M. Rosinval and me: allow me, without any further explanation, to entreat you will banish from your mind those fears an extreme delicacy of sentiment has created, and which no circumstances connected with this foolish affair can at all justify."

Julia, greatly relieved by this assertion, felt only happiness at the idea that now her correctness of conduct and veracity were established in the minds of those with whom she was hereafter to associate, she again expressed

her gratitude to the chevalier, spoke affectionately of Madame de Viverais, sincerely wished to see her in the full enjoyment of those pleasures she so much lamented the deprivation of ; and during the progress of the conversation, insensibly regained all the cheerfulness and good humour natural to her character : the dejection and languor, which had given an expression of melancholy to her always interesting features, now yielded to the smiles of contentment, and the roses of health.

The chevalier observed this change with admiration and delight, and rejoiced at having contributed to create it.

After remaining nearly an hour in the Chinese temple, Julia, accompanied

by De Courcy, walked slowly to the castle. Soon after they had reached the house, De Montmorency and his uncle returned from their day's sport. Exclamations, shouts of triumph, and the barking of several dogs, resounded through the hall and passages, which were answered by loud bursts of laughter from the Baron and De Montmorency, whilst voices, wholly unknown to Julia, incessantly vociferated — “ Bravo ! Daphne ! — Clio ! -- Ranger ! — Here, my good old Neptune—Come, my boy— ‘Twas famous,” exclaimed the sportsmen ; and in the midst of this tumult they burst into the drawing-room, followed by half a dozen panting dogs, covered with dust.

De Montmorency's reception of the

chevalier was gentlemanly and kind he turned towards his sporting companions, and said, “ Allow me to introduce to you my dearest and best friend; he is devoted to the pleasures of the field, and is a real acquisition to our party ; how much I regretted his absence this morning ;” then addressing De Courcy, he added, “ You will join our next party, will you not ? ”

The chevalier returned an appropriate and polite answer. During dinner nothing was talked of but the events of the morning : the skilful manœuvres of the unfortunate stag were recited, and each gentleman in the company alternately extolled his favourite dog, and related instances of his superior speed and sagacity.

Julia, wearied by a conversation in which she could take no part, tried several times, but in vain, to diversify the subject; but she was doomed to hear every minute circumstance detailed by her guests relative to the exploits of the morning.

The chevalier, who was seated next to Julia, frequently attempted to address her on topics more interesting to a female, but he was so repeatedly interrupted, or appealed to, by the baron, that it was impossible to utter one sentence on any subject unconnected with field sports.

The moment Julia could do so with propriety, she retired from the table, and remained absent until the evening.

On returning to the drawing-room, she found the baron sleeping soundly on the sofa, the strangers having all left the castle, and her husband conversing in a low voice with the chevalier.

" May I venture to ask, gentlemen," said the countess smiling, " if hunting is still the subject of your conversation ? "

" No," replied De Montmorency. " I was requesting Albert to explain the cause of his duel, which I am anxious to learn the particulars of: but he refuses to gratify my curiosity, and, for what reason heaven only knows, declines all conversation on the subject. Was it not for my knowledge of his strict principles of honour, and unequalled goodness

of temper, I should suspect from his silent that my friend had been the aggressor."

The chevalier parried this attack with all the ease and elegance so natural to a man of the world.

He substituted playfulness for candor, sophistry for reasoning. He rallied De Montmorency, laughed at Rosinval, and indirectly bestowed on Julia the most delicate flattery.

Julia admired the facility of his arguments, the brilliancy of his elocution, and the address with which he had defended himself against the attack of his friend, whilst the latter remained in that species of uncertainty where the heart, naturally indulgent, receives assertions as facts, although vague

suspicious glance across the mind, and weaken confidence without entirely destroying it.

Julia, relieved from the burthen of sorrow, which, owing to the necessity of concealment from her husband, was undermining her happiness and health, now gave herself up to her new and gratifying sensations.

Her manner towards her husband was affectionate—grateful, when addressing De Courcy, and respectful to the baron, who, delighted at finding the cloud dispersed, which had darkened his beloved Julia's countenance, loudly expressed his satisfaction. De Montmorency, who had for some time been observing his wife, did not seem at all gratified by her unusual cheer-

fulness, but on the contrary appeared discontented and restless, and during supper was almost uncivilly silent.

Julia took the earliest opportunity of retiring to her room : when alone, she revolved in her mind all the occurrences of the day. De Montmorency's conduct gave her uneasiness. He was evidently dissatisfied, and, she thought, with her. The first impulse of her heart was to fly to him, request an explanation, and by every effort of affection try to sooth his mind, and thus repair any error she might unintentionally have fallen into. But pride, that bane to female happiness, soon stifled this intention. She recollect ed the coldness with which Montmorency had on the preceding

evening received the assertion of her unaltered attachment; and she resolved not again to expose herself to a scene so mortifying to her vanity.

Thoughtful, restless, and dissatisfied, Julia soon dismissed her attendants, and then yielded to a species of self-commiseration. "Is this the happiness, (she thought) that I expected to enjoy?" Tears escaped from her eyes, slowly fell on her bosom, and a crowd of melancholy ideas plunged her into that state of mental debility, when the soul, scarcely susceptible of a strong impression, vaguely measures the extent of its sorrows, unable exactly to define the cause of, or apply the remedy to the existing evil. Soon, however, the consoling reflection

of never having deviated from her duty, insensibly restored Julia's energy; she accused De Montmorency of unpardonable caprice, determined to avoid any explanation with him; and her wounded pride impelled her to resent his supposed unkindness, instead of endeavouring to conciliate his affections. When she entered the breakfast room on the following morning, De Montmorency did not as usual meet her at the door and lead her to a seat: leaning against the chimney-piece, turning over the leaves of a pamphlet, he did not even raise his eyes, or seem to notice her presence, until the baron expressed his unhappiness at perceiving the traces of sorrow

and dejection in the features of his beloved niece.

Julia, who really felt pained and angry by her husband's indifference, reddened with vexation, and when their looks met, her cheeks were suffused with crimson. She hastily assured the baron she had never been in better health or spirits, carefully avoided addressing De Montmorency, and with anxiety and kindness expressed her hope that the chevalier felt himself convalescent.

Her extreme agitation gave to her features, naturally variable, an unusual play and expression; her tone of voice was sweetly plaintive, and even tremulous,

This unequivocal symptom of a forced cheerfulness would not have escaped a more experienced observer than De Montmorency. An accurate judge of human nature would have discovered an unhappy mind, through the flimsy veil of affected gaiety.— But the count only remarked Julia's unusual vivacity, her volubility, and the bursts of approbation and laughter with which she received every sentence uttered by De Courcy or the baron. His surprise and displeasure increased his stiffness and gravity; he threw the pamphlet on the table, gave his wife a stern, nay angry look, and abruptly left the room.

With him evaporated all Julia's assumed spirits; her eyes filled with

tears, and she answered whatever was said to her only by monosyllables.

"What a fine morning we have!" at length exclaimed the baron, approaching a window. "It would really be a sin not to hunt to-day; I hope Frederic is gone to give orders for our immediate departure; we surely ought to enjoy such weather as this. You will go of course, chevalier; Philip shall drive you in the phæton, and you will then get on as rapidly at if you were on horseback, and enjoy the day's sport without injury to your poor wounded wing: am I not right, Julia?"

"I am infinitely grateful for your kind consideration, my dear sir," replied the chevalier; "but, extremely

fatigued as I am by my journey, I wish to rest the whole of this day; to-morrow I shall be at your orders, and will then have much happiness in accompanying you in the phæton."

"As you please, my dear fellow," said the baron. "Liberty is the motto one should assume in the country.—Farewel then—I am going to join De Montmorency—God bless you, my sweet girl," he added, affectionately pressing Julia's hand, and immediately left the room.

Julia, much affected, followed him with her eyes, and exclaimed: "Dear, excellent man!" then stifling a sigh, she added, with more calmness, "Will M. de Courcy excuse me if I withdraw? I am accustomed to devote

my mornings to study, and I trust it will gratify him to know that his presence does not derange the usual system of a house I hope he will consider as his own."

The chevalier bowed respectfully ; but his looks expressed so much surprise and disappointment that Julia felt embarrassed. She had risen, and was about to retire, when De Courcy, advancing towards her, said, " I intend, madam, to write this morning to the Countess de Viverais ; have you any commands to honour me with for my cousin ? "

" Oh yes : thank her, sir," replied Julia—“ express to her my gratitude, my affectionate and sincere gratitude for her friendship. I mean to answer

her letter ; but at this moment it is impossible I cannot I would not—”

Julia pronounced the last few words in a voice scarcely intelligible. A vivid blush passed over her neck and face : she gracefully bowed to the chevalier, and withdrew.

She did not go down stairs until the dinner bell rang, when she found her husband, De Courcy, and the baron, conversing, as on the preceding day, on the subject of field sports. Julia, in silence, seated herself at the table, ate little, and complained of a severe head-ache.

“ By every saint in heaven, Julia,” exclaimed the baron, “ I swear I will burn all your books—for this devil of

a rage you have for studying will end in making you seriously ill."

Julia took the baron's hand, pressed it affectionately, and with a sigh thanked him for the interest he took in her health.

"Do you think a drive in the carriage will be of any use to you?" said De Montmorency with kindness: "perhaps the air will alleviate the pain in your head."

Julia raised her eyes, and looked at her husband, on whose countenance she thought she discovered a mixture of tenderness and anxiety that made her heart palpitate—but before she could reply to him, the baron had darted to the bell, which he pulled with violence, saying, "To be sure, to be sure

it will do her good—it is an excellent idea; we will order the horses immediately ;” and he left the room, without waiting until the servant came to receive his orders.

“ I will do whatever you wish, or that will be agreeable to you,” said Julia; “ although I own quietness is all I at present am anxious for, and ‘tis only you who can procure it for me ;” she added in a low voice, leaning on her husband’s shoulder.

De Montmorency turned round, looked steadfastly at Julia, gently moved her arm which rested on his, arose from his seat, and walked backwards and forwards in the room apparently much agitated.

The worthy baron now entered the

room, saying all was ready. He seemed so fully persuaded that a drive would cure Julia's head-ache, that she could not refuse to make the experiment, and she presented her hand with a smile. He assisted her into the carriage, ~~and~~ which he also entered, followed by his nephew and De Courcy.

The weather was delightfully serene. After a drive of about three miles, they descended into a valley irrigated by the Loire. They left the carriage, and on foot wandered through several groves and thickets, interspersed with cottages, whose natural beauties and rural distribution agreeably diversified the scene, and altogether formed a most interesting landscape. The fresh air and exercise had revived

Julia. Leaning on her husband's arm, who pressed her to his heart, whenever he assisted her over any difficult parts of the road, she wholly abandoned herself to the sweet sensations which the striking and varied spectacle of a beautiful autumnal evening must ever create in an uninitiated mind.

De Courcy's instructive conversation, together with the baron's honest and artless gaiety, insensibly dispelled the cloud which had all the day darkened De Montmorency's countenance, and Julia's ardent imagination eagerly caressed the hope that they might still be happy.

Twilight had succeeded the rays of the sun—already slight shades of dark-

ness were extended over the valley, and still no one thought of returning to the castle, until the baron observed that possibly the evening dew might be injurious to his niece.

De Montmorency immediately left them in search of his attendants, who with the carriage had been in waiting at the entrance of the wood; the baron hastened after him, and Julia, leaning on De Courcy's arm, slowly followed. The chevalier took the opportunity of their being alone to say in a low voice:—

“ I have executed your orders, madam; my letter goes by this day's post; it contains a circumstantial account of the manner in which I fulfilled the commission with which I

was honoured ; and announces to Madame de Viverais your intention of speedily answering her letter."

Julia was going to reply, but perceiving that De Montmorency was attentively observing her, she quickened her pace, and hastened towards him. During their drive to the castle, the count took but little part in the conversation ; he scarcely answered Julia when she spoke to him, and during the remainder of the evening seemed grave and full of reflection. Still he was more affectionate and attentive to his wife than on the preceding day, and when they separated for the night, no unpleasant reflection disturbed Julia's rest.

On the following days the count

shewed the same solicitude and anxiety for his wife ; and although his manner was less ardent, less devoted than during the first three months after their marriage, yet he was attentive, and had lost that cold indifference and discontented manner so distressing to Julia's feelings. Her desire to please, and render him happy, hourly increased ; her mind regained its usual elasticity, and no longer having a motive for solitude, she spent the greatest part of her time in the society of her husband and his friend.

The Chevalier de Courcy spoke the English language with elegant correctness, and took great pleasure in giving Julia lessons in the count's presence. The baron commended her

progress, approved of all the remarks and arguments of his beloved niece, who, pleased at studying under so able a master, expressed her gratitude to De Courcy with all the ardour natural to her character. One evening as the baron, De Montmorency, and his wife, were listening to De Courcy, who was reading to them (in which elegant accomplishment he peculiarly excelled) one of Racine's most celebrated tragedies, their attention was suddenly withdrawn from the sorrows of the interesting Andromache, by screams of fire, which each moment seemed to become more distinct ; and before any of the gentlemen could leave the room to inquire the cause of the alarm ; a servant opened the door, and with

terror and consternation depicted on his countenance, told them the wing of the castle, in which some workmen were employed to make some alterations, was in flames ; adding, that there was reason to apprehend, from the rapidity of the conflagration, that the entire building would be destroyed by the ravaging element. The chevalier instantly darted out of the room : neither De Montmorency or the baron could follow him, being obliged to remain with Julia, whose terror was so excessive as to make them fear a serious injury to her health, and destruction to her husband's hopes. A convulsive shivering prevented her articulation, and her eyes, devoid of expression, seemed rivetted on the

door. An awful silence prevailed until De Courcy's return, who brought the welcome intelligence of the fire being extinguished, and consequently all cause for apprehension was at an end. Julia on seeing him screamed dreadfully, and fainted in her uncle's arms. Her female attendants were immediately summoned ; they applied all the remedies usual under similar circumstances. De Montmorency, distracted at their want of success, as his wife was still insensible, recollecting having, when at Paris, given her a little sandal wood box, containing some very highly extolled antispasmodic drops, and instantly left the room to fetch it.

Having reached Julia's room, he

looked for the little case of medicines in the place where he had usually seen it : not finding it, he searched in every part of the room, with no better success, and was about to relinquish all hope of obtaining it, when he perceived the key left in his wife's writing desk, and supposing that possibly the box might be there, hastily opened it, and found what he was so anxious about.

After having selected the phial he wanted, he replaced the sandal wood case with so much haste, that several sheets of paper, loosely scattered in the writing desk, fell to the floor. De Montmorency stooped to pick them up, intending to replace them in the desk ; but the following words arrested

his attention, and occasioned him such extreme agitation, that he was obliged to support himself against a chair whilst he finished reading them.

“Thou knowest with what innocence I received thy love, under the name of friendship: my imagination represented thee under the æthereal form of an angelic substance, or as an emanation from the deity. Thy lovely eyes, whose lustre is softened by a sweet smile, shone with a celestial splendour. I admired thee, and heaven——”

“Yes, yes,” said De Montmorency, almost annihilated by his sensations; “yes, it is then as I feared—worthless, depraved Julia! vile and ungrateful Albert! ‘tis De Courcy,” he added, with rage, “yes, ‘tis him—it can be

no other than De Courcy, and my suspicions are verified."

He darted out of the room, gave the bottle to a servant, whom he met on the stairs, and scarcely giving time for his horse to be saddled, set off in a gallop, totally unmindful of the heavy rain then falling, and never slackened his speed until he found himself in the middle of a heath, nearly two miles from the Castle of St. Louis.

There his ideas were all concentrated into the impression made on his mind by the lines he had just found in his wife's writing desk. A crowd of recollections and remarks pressed upon his imagination; the mysterious conversation between Julia and De Courcy on the evening previous to their leaving

Paris; her unaccountable depression of spirits and love of solitude, ever since she had been at St. Louis, coupled with the sudden change from determined melancholy, to absolute cheerfulness of manner, and that too immediately on the chevalier's arrival, were, in De Montmorency's judgment, so many convincing proofs of her guilt. Imprecations, reproaches, and projects of revenge, relieved his heart during the first moments of his anger, from the scarcely bearable weight by which it was oppressed. He talked to himself like one insane, determined to challenge De Courcy, then for ever fly from the traitors who had torn happiness from his bosom.

In a moment his ideas changed, and

he resolved to return home, reproach his wife with her depravity, tell her how infinitely despicable she had become, and finally remove her to a convent, where her remaining days might be spent in bitter repentance of her dereliction from virtue, faith, and honour. After thus exhausting his rage, his thoughts reverted to the happiness he had experienced during the first months of their union: he recollect ed Julia's situation, and that soon she would bless him as the father of her child.

The idea of his child, the child of his Julia, whom until now he had so fondly loved, nearly overcome him: burning tears escaped from his eyes, and rolled over his cheeks; but he

dashed them off, hated himself for his weakness, and once again determined on vengeance.

"De Courcy shall die!" he exclaimed, "or he shall deprive me of an existence he has rendered a burthen to me: but, Julia——" He could not finish the sentence, although thoroughly convinced that sentiments of contempt and hatred had superseded all confidence and affection between them.

De Montmorency distinguished the sound of the supper bell at the castle, but he still felt a decided aversion to returning there.

His cloathing was wet with the rain, yet he, in equal agitation of spirits, continued to walk his horse under the park wall, until hearing dis-

tant voices, and fearful they proceeded from the servants who might be in search of him, he resolved to avoid them, and by a circuitous route attain the castle.

He left his horse with a stable boy, whom he met at the gates, and went up to his room by the back staircase : he immediately rung for the valet, ordered him to tell the countess not to wait supper for him, and threw himself into a chair, in a state of mental anguish not easily to be described.

“ My dear master,” said the old servant, with tears in his eyes, who had attended the count from his infancy, “ might have relied on our zeal and anxiety for our beloved lady’s health, and need not have exposed

himself to such severe weather. My lord's absence pained the countess and all his domestics, any one of whom would have felt the honour of being chosen to fetch the physician; but Madame Beaumont, our good house-keeper, fearing the alarm of fire might seriously agitate my lady, sent off an express for Dr. Moreas the moment the flames were extinguished. The doctor on his arrival took some blood from the countess, and the Chevalier De Courcy told us he had no apprehension of any bad consequences. My dear master has a sincerely attached friend in the chevalier—I shall never forget how miserable he seemed, whilst our lady was insensible: with what anxiety did he....”

"Leave the room," said De Montmorency, in a voice like thunder: "who asks you for your opinion? Instantly begone, sir."

The old man trembled, stammered out some words, walked towards the door, and then said.— "I do not deserve this harshness from my dear master, merely for——"

The count repeated the order he had before given in a still more imperative tone, which the servant dared not disobey. De Montmorency then locked the door, and again threw himself into a chair, and gave himself up not to his reflections, for he was incapable of connecting his ideas, but to that total confusion and chaos of all the faculties of our being, which may

rather be called the delirium of the sensations.

In a little time, however, he obtained some command over himself, and then he with calmness, and consequently more judgment, reviewed his actual position. He was aware of the imprudence of causing a tumult in his family, especially at a period when any violent agitation might endanger the lives of his wife and child ; and he determined to confine his sorrow to his own bosom, to use dissimulation towards the countess, and conceal from her his displeasure, in order the better to watch her actions, until he could discover a glaring proof of her dereliction from virtue, then tax her with

depravity, and separate himself from her for ever.

Such were De Montmorency's resolutions, which he felt anxious immediately to act upon, and therefore hastened to Julia's apartment, which communicated with his own dressing room. She was reclining on a sofa, and her women were preparing to undress her.

On perceiving her husband, she uttered an exclamation of joy, dismissed her attendants, and addressing him in the most endearing language, expressed her uneasiness at his not having changed his wet cloaths.

"Dearest Frederic," she added, "why did you go out during such

dreadful weather? Can you suppose such a proof of your affection gratifying to your Julia? Ought you to expose a health so very valuable to me?"

"Let us not speak of my health," the count coldly replied, "it is not worth your attention for a moment, madam, but tell me how you find yourself: your recovery is the only thing now interesting to me."

"What strange language! what a chilling manner!" said Julia, her eyes filling with tears. "Ah! Frederic! how can I reconcile your present conduct with...."

De Montmorency instantly felt how badly he executed the plan he had formed, and he hastened to repair his

error, by assuring Julia, that she alone occupied all his thoughts.

He took her hand, raised it to his lips, and then placed it on his forehead to conceal his agitation.

"Dearest love, your head burns," said Julia with terror, "you are not well, and I am wretched: tell me, Frederic——"

"I must own I am a little disordered," replied De Montmorency, interrupting his wife, "and that you are the cause of—that is I—ah, Julia!"

"For mercy's sake—in pity to my agony," said Julia, nearly distracted, "explain to me the meaning of these broken sentences. What occasions your agitation?"

"Nothing, positively nothing," re-

plied De Montmorency, affecting a cheerfulness the expression of his countenance decidedly contradicted. "It is merely fatigue, and the uneasiness occasioned by your indisposition, that has caused my head...."

"Uncle," said Julia, addressing the baron, who at that moment entered the room accompanied by De Courcy : "dear uncle, see how ill my poor Frederic is : he has some uneasiness on his spirits, which he perseveres in concealing from me, and I am miserable."

The baron approached his nephew, and taking his hand, said :— I am a very poor doctor ; but you, De Courcy, who knows so many things, can you tell me if he has any fever ?"

"That is not necessary," said De

Montmorency rudely; “when I am worse, I shall send for a physician; but at present I require only rest, and shall immediately retire: to-morrow, Julia, I hope to be more calm, and to find you entirely recovered.”

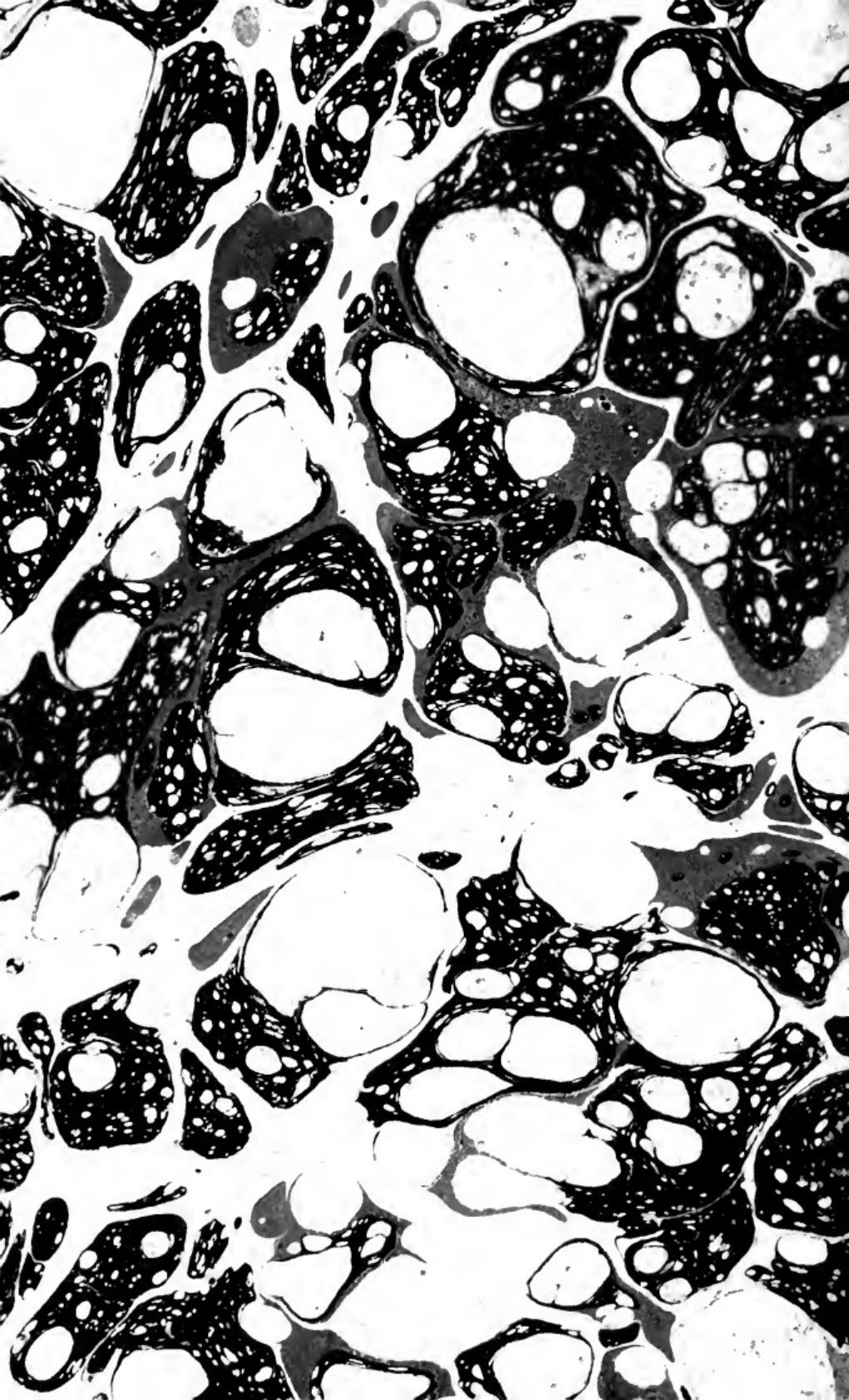
He then took a wax light from the table, wished the baron a good night, and stiffly bowing to De Courcy, withdrew to his apartment.

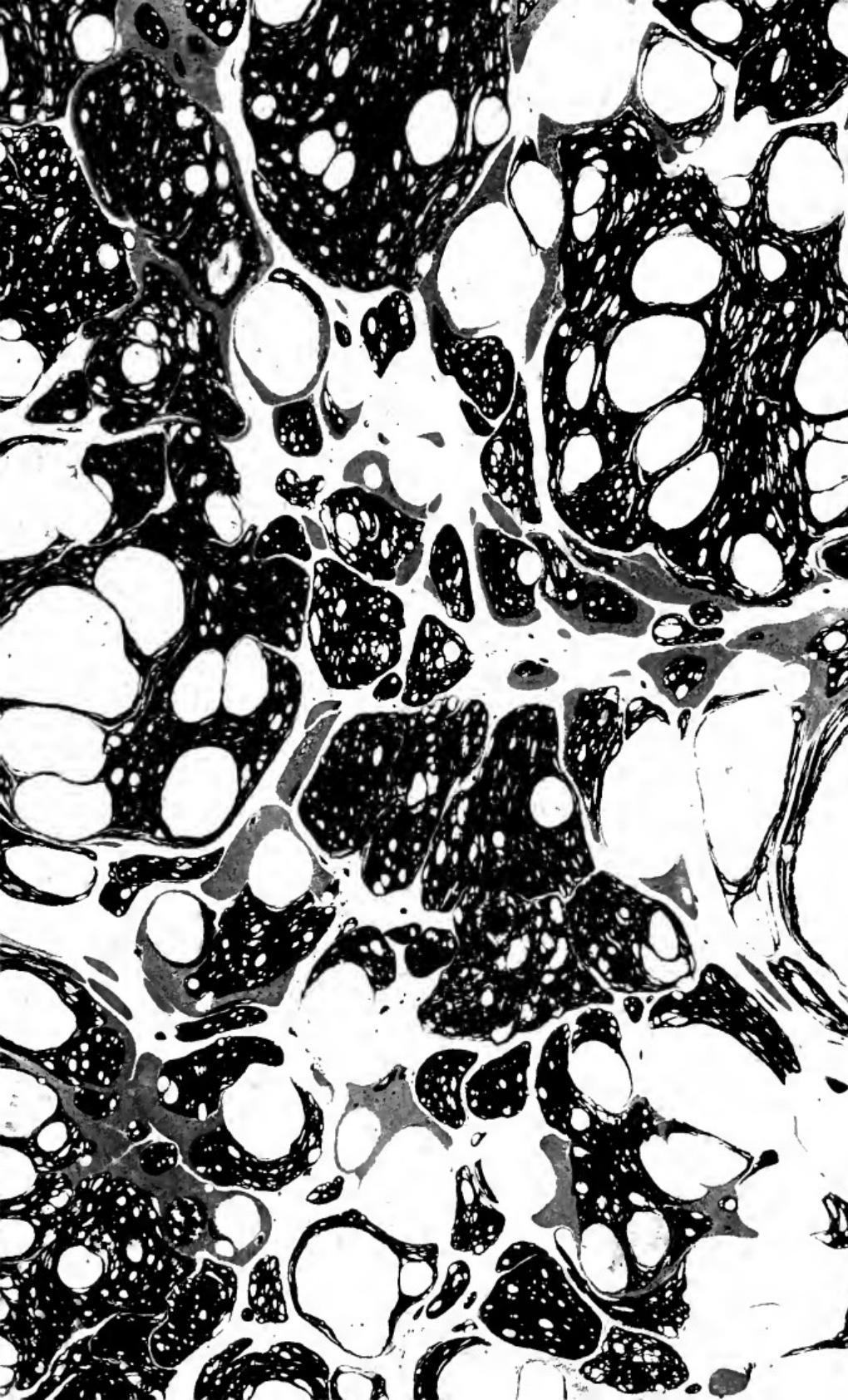
END OF VOL. III.











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